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ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE

IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOLUME THE FIRST

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MICHEL de MONTAGNE.

Published by The Navarre Society, London.

ESSAYS OF
MONTAIGNE

TRANSLATED BY CHARLES COTTON

TO WHICH ARE ADDED SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF MONTAIGNE, NOTES, A TRANSLATION OF ALL THE LETTERS KNOWN TO BE EXTANT, AND AN ENLARGED INDEX

With Portraits

EDITED BY

WILLIAM CAREW HAZLITT

IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOLUME THE FIRST

Que sçais-je?

LONDON: MCMXXIII

PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR THE NAVARRE SOCIETY LIMITED

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PREFACE

THE present publication was on its first appearance in 1877[1] intended to supply a recognised deficiency in our literature—a library edition of the Essays of Montaigne. This great French writer deserves to be regarded as a classic, not only in the land of his birth, but in all countries and in all literatures. His Essays, which are at once the most celebrated and the most permanent of his productions, form a magazine out of which such minds as those of Bacon and Shakespear did not disdain to help themselves; and, indeed, as Hallam observes, the Frenchman's literary importance largely results from the share which his mind had in influencing other minds, coeval and subsequent. But, at the same time, estimating the value and rank of the Essayist, we are not to leave out of account the drawbacks and the circumstances of the period: the imperfect state of education, the comparative scarcity of books, and the limited opportunities of intellectual intercourse. Montaigne freely borrowed of others, and he has found men willing to borrow of him as freely. He has been the setting-up of many an author; and we trace him in the pages of writers so different and so far apart as Shakespear, Pascal, Molière, Rousseau,

[1] In three volumes 8vo. With this publication, although my name was on the title-page as that of thee ditor, I had nothing to do beyond the introductory matter, my late father having undertaken to correct the text and read the proofs. He had associated himself with the Essays since 1842, when he brought out the first edition of his recension of Cotton and Coste.

and Voltaire. He lent himself to plagiarism by the unstinted profusion with which he brought within easy and tempting reach a vast body of serviceable references, by the fresh and impressive lights in which he put the fruits of his studies, and by the comparative obscurity of his Essays in a popular sense. Nor can I think of any one who would have been less surprised at these appropriations or have less resented them than Montaigne himself.

We need not wonder at the reputation which he with seeming facility achieved. He was, without being aware of it, the leader of a new school in letters and morals. His book stood apart from all others which were at that date in the world. It diverted the ancient currents of thought into new channels. It told its readers with unexampled frankness, what its writer's opinion was about men and things, and threw what must have been a strange kind of new light on many matters but darkly understood. Above all, the Essayist uncased himself, and made his intellectual and physical organism public property. He took the world into his confidence on all subjects. His Essays were a sort of literary anatomy, where we get a diagnosis of the writer's mind, made by himself at different levels and under a large variety of operating influences. They are richly autobiographical; but the material demands assortment and collation with the particulars elsewhere gatherable. I am by no means satisfied that in his admirable biography Mr. St. John has made as full use of these scattered stores as he might have done.

Of all egotists, Montaigne, if not the greatest, was the most fascinating, because, perhaps, he was the least affected and most truthful. What he did

and what he had professed to do, was to dissect his mind, and shew us, as best he could, how it was made, and what relation it bore to external objects. He investigated his mental structure as a schoolboy pulls his watch to pieces, to examine the mechanism of the works; and the result, accompanied by illustrations abounding with originality and force, he delivered to his fellow-men in a book—one almost more replete with quotations from other writers than any extant: in matter and thought purely personal more exuberantly full.

Eloquence, rhetorical effect, poetry, were alike remote from his design. He expressly disclaims the possession of learning, an acquaintance with terms, and a knowledge of style. He did not write from necessity, scarcely perhaps for fame. But he lets us understand that the pleasure derived from his voluntary employment was to him an adequate return. He desired to leave France, nay, and the world, something to be remembered by, something which should tell what kind of a man he was—what he felt, thought, suffered—and he succeeded immeasurably, I apprehend, beyond his expectations. This is the secret of his repute and estimation, hardly popularity. His pages are candid and unrestrained to a fault. His book may be said to err on the side of honesty, and he shocks us not unfrequently by the strangely ingenuous frankness of his disclosures. Whatever we may judge the Essays to be as they lie before us, there is the feeling that, had any professional school of criticism existed in France in the author's time, and its verdict been present to his mind, they might have been more chastened and laboured, and, on the contrary, less spontaneous, less conversational,

less intimate, less a book constituting in itself a class and a type.

It was reasonable enough that Montaigne should expect for his work a certain share of celebrity in Gascony, and even, as time went on, throughout France; but he professes, at least in one place of the Essays, to doubt whether they would, owing to changes of taste and diction, outlast fifty years; and it is, at any rate, scarcely probable that he foresaw how his renown was to become world-wide; how he was to occupy an almost unique position as a man of letters and a moralist; how the Essays would be read, in all the principal languages of Europe, by millions of intelligent human beings, who never heard of Perigord or the League, and who are in doubt, if they are questioned, whether the author lived in the sixteenth or the eighteenth century. This is true fame. A man of genius belongs to no period and no country. He speaks the language of nature, which is always everywhere the same.

In order to do full justice to this illustrious writer, it is necessary to take into account the exceptionally and almost heretical or treasonable breadth of his opinions, and his candour and courage in making them public. A comparison[1] has been instituted between him and Voltaire in this respect; and both men occupied a high social position and were in good worldly circumstances. The same indeed may be predicated of La Boetie himself and of François Hotman, however dissimilar and unequal; and these indications combine to shew that the political principles which arrived at so violent a climax in 1789 had already more than

[1] By M. Vermorel in his small edition of the *Discours de la Servitude Volontaire de La Boetie*, 12mo, Paris, 1873.

germinated two centuries before. It is in no way remarkable that all great writers should be advocates of personal liberty; but it is so that those who had so clear an interest in the preservation of the *status quo*, and, in the eyes of Montaigne, were in such close contact with the court, should have leant without disguise to the anti-monarchical side. Our own Shakespear was half a republican at heart; but he found it convenient to leave his persons of the drama to speak on his behalf. In France, England, and throughout Europe the same spirit of inquiry and doubt was in progress, destined in different countries to accomplish different results.

The text of these volumes is taken from the first edition of Cotton's version, printed in 3 vols. 8vo, 1685–86, and republished in 1693, 1700, 1711, 1738, and 1743, in the same number of volumes and the same size. In the earliest impression the errors of the press are corrected merely as far as page 240 of the first volume; and all the editions follow one another. That of 1685–86 was the only one which the translator lived to see. He died in 1687, leaving behind him an interesting and little-known collection of poems, which appeared posthumously, 8vo, 1689.

But it was considered imperative to correct Cotton's translation by a careful collation with the best available French texts; and parallel passages from Florio's earlier and decidedly very inferior—often almost burlesque—undertaking have occasionally been inserted at the foot of the page. A Life of the Author and all his recovered Letters, five-and-thirty in number, have also been given; but, as regards the correspondence, it can scarcely be doubted that it is in a purely fragmentary state. To do more than furnish a sketch of the leading

incidents in Montaigne's life seemed, in the presence of many biographical enterprises of recent date on the part of French students—the latest being that of MM. Courbet and Royer, 1872–1900—a work of supererogation, at least on the present occasion. The edition cited is, no doubt, an advance on its predecessors; yet, looking at the fact that it was twenty-eight years in the press, a far better result might have been attained and expected. It is in more than one way lamentably imperfect and unsatisfactory.

The besetting sin of both Montaigne's translators seems to have been a propensity for reducing his language and phraseology to the language and phraseology of the age and country to which they belonged, and, moreover, inserting paragraphs and words, not here and there only, but constantly and habitually, from an evident desire and view to elucidate or strengthen their author's meaning. The result has generally been unfortunate; and I have, in the case of all these interpolations on Cotton's part, felt bound, where I did not cancel them, to throw them down into the notes, not thinking it right that Montaigne should be allowed any longer to stand sponsor for what he never wrote; and reluctant, on the other hand, to suppress the intruding matter entirely, where it appeared to possess a value of its own.

Nor is redundancy or paraphrase the only form of transgression in Cotton, for there are places in his author which he thought proper to omit, and it is hardly necessary to say that the restoration of all such matter to the text was considered essential to its integrity and completeness. Cotton has farthermore sinned, in my opinion, in introducing whimsical and heterogeneous English

colloquialisms of his own time as equivalents for the language of his author; which they by no means are.

Mr. W. Reeves, present owner of the copyright interest in the now scarce edition of 1877, having requested me to see the book once more through the press, I have taken the opportunity to introduce as many additions and corrections as possible; I have given the letter of Montaigne to Henry III., not previously found in any English edition; and a facsimile is supplied of that addressed to Henry IV. in 1590, and first printed by M. Achille Jubinal, 8vo, 1850, and I have spared no reasonable pains to render the book on its reappearance as satisfactory as possible to English readers.

I found, in fact, that the text of 1877, which my late father kindly undertook to revise, was still disfigured by innumerable errors and misprints, legacies from the antecedent impressions, and originally due to the negligence of Cotton or his imperfect knowledge of French, and that the Letters had been so poorly translated, that it was imperative to do the work over again so far as I had the means; and the English versions of the foreign quotations in the text have been similarly subjected to elaborate revision. The mistakes in the names of persons and places are now rectified to the utmost extent of my power; without permitting myself to hope that all the original carelessness of Montaigne, or his translators' and editors' faults, are set right,—I entertain the expectation that the book in its present form will prove at least infinitely more worthy of the author than any of its predecessors.

The quotations of Montaigne from ancient and modern authors were agreeable to a fashion not

yet entirely abandoned, but probably carried in his case to an unparalleled length. The practice, which we owe, after all, however, to the leisure of his later days (for in the editions of the Essays published in 1580-82–87–88 the extracts are comparatively few), has involved an enormous amount of labour in the process of verification, and has been occasionally aggravated by the difficulty of deciding whether to accept the version printed or left behind by the Essayist, or adapt the text to the standard at present recognised. For he not only resorted, of necessity, to editions current in his day, but occasionally transcribed at random, if he did not in some cases rely on his memory, or copy at second-hand.

In 1875, Michel de Malvezin published *Montaigne: son Origine, sa Famille*, Bordeaux, 8vo ; and in 1893 M. Paul Bonnefon brought out, also at Bordeaux, a volume, accompanied by numerous illustrations, entitled *Montaigne: l'Homme et l'Œuvre.* To the latter I have been considerably indebted. There have been several other monographs, demonstrating the keen interest in this writer ; but M. Bonnefon has incorporated their substance, as well as that of the work by Malvezin, in his own extremely painstaking, well-executed, and discriminative book.

It would be no difficult task to form a volume of Montaigneana from the Essays, and Mr. St. John has in a certain measure in his 1858 volumes carried out this idea. But, considering the position and reputation of the author, and the wide, varied, and illustrious circle in which he moved, it takes us by surprise when we note his absence from the innumerable volumes of anecdote produced since 1592. His private life must have been distinguished by some episodes and traits deserving of perpetuation,

if they had been only items of gossip, and even scandal. Possibly his name, alike in France and elsewhere, was long insufficiently popular to recommend him to the editors of that class of literature.

The question of selecting a French text on which an English one should be based is so far outside the present enterprise, that my commission, as I have explained, was restricted to an amended reprint of the three-volume translation produced in 1877 ; and that commission I have, from my warm interest in the anthor, vastly exceeded. But it might form a debatable point, even if an entirely new English version should be hereafter made from the French, how far the editor or translator could or ought to deal with the endless variations in successive issues between 1580 and 1595. For it is the case of an author who wrote a single important work, and whose ample leisure afforded him unsurpassed facilities for altering, adding, eliminating, transposing ; and of this opportunity Montaigne assuredly availed himself to the fullest extent.

W. C. H.

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SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF MONTAIGNE[1]

THE author of the Essays was born, as he informs us himself, between eleven and twelve o'clock in the day, the last of February 1533,[2] at the chateau of St. Michel de Montaigne. He was possibly descended from a family which had been located in those parts many generations. An Everard de Montaigne went to the Fifth Crusade in 1202.[3] He mentions that the name was not uncommon, however, and predicts the possibility that some other Montaigne might hereafter be credited or otherwise with what he had done. His father, Pierre Eyquem, esquire, born at Montaigne, 29th September 1495, and a person engaged in a lucrative business at Bordeaux, was successively first Jurat of the town of Bordeaux (1530), Under-Mayor (1536), Jurat for the second time in 1540, Procureur in 1546, and at length Mayor from 1553 to 1556. He was a man of austere probity, who had "a particular regard for honour and for propriety in his person and attire . . . a mighty good faith in his speech, and a conscience and a religious feeling inclining to superstition, rather

[1] This is translated freely from that prefixed to the *variorum* Paris edition, 1854, 4 vols. 8vo. This biography is the more desirable that it contains all the really interesting and important matter in the Journal of the Tour in Germany and Italy, which, as it was merely written under Montaigne's dictation, and is in the third person, is scarcely worth publication, as a whole, in an English dress.

[2] Essays, lib. i. ch. 19.

[3] Hazlitt's *Venetian Republic*, 1900, i. 237.

than to the other extreme"[1]; but he was also, as we have to learn in perusing the Essays of his more distinguished son, that son's veritable father in more than a single respect, yet in some ways different, inasmuch as he was, for instance, a man extremely particular in ordering his household affairs. He did not profess to be a man of letters; but he was very far from being illiterate; he was a master of the Latin, Italian, and Spanish languages; and in early life, as a youth of seventeen, he published some Latin verses, thus testifying at all events to his possession of a fair scholastic culture.[2] Pierre Eyquem bestowed great care on the education of his children, especially on the practical side of it. To associate closely his son Michel with the people, and attach him to those who stand in need of assistance, he caused him to be held at the font by persons of the meanest position; subsequently he put him out to nurse with poor persons in the adjoining village of Papessus,[3] and then, at a later period, made him accustom himself to the most common sort of living, taking care, nevertheless, to cultivate his mind, and superintend its development without the exercise of undue rigour or constraint. From many passages in the Essays we gather with satisfaction that he retained through life a steadfast, sincere, and charming affection for his father, alone sufficient to atone for a thousand foibles. We all remember the ancestral cloak, in which he felt as if "wrapped up" in him. We shall encounter

[1] Essays, ii. 2.

[2] Bonnefon, *Montaigne*, 1893, p. 16. The elder Montaigne left a journal of his Italian experiences. See *infra*, ii. 251, and, again, iii. 23. Was it this circumstance which prompted his son to do the same?

[3] A custom then not peculiar, nor confined to France. See Pennant's *History of Whiteford and Holywell*, 1796, p. 2.

in the course of the Essays some grateful and engaging reminiscences of the elder Montaigne. His son followed him, he tells us, even in the style of his dress. Of his mother, on the contrary, he has nothing to say, which in the case of great men is most unusual. He gives us the minutest account of his earliest years, narrates how they used to awake him by the sound of some agreeable music,[1] and how he learned Latin, without suffering the rod or shedding a tear, before beginning French, thanks to the German teacher whom his father had placed near him, and who never addressed him except in the language of Virgil and Cicero. The study of Greek took precedence. At six years of age young Montaigne went to the College of Guienne at Bordeaux, where he had as preceptors the most eminent scholars of the sixteenth century, Nicole Grouchy, Guerente, Muret, and Buchanan. At thirteen he had passed through all the classes; and, as he was destined for the law, he left school to study that science. He was then about fourteen, but these early years of his life are involved in obscurity. The next information that we have is that in 1554 he received the appointment of councillor in the Parliament of Bordeaux; in 1559 he was at Bar-le-Duc with the court of Francis II., and in the year following he was present at Rouen to witness the declaration of the majority of Charles IX. We do not know in what manner he was engaged on these occasions; but from casual notices of incidents, which occurred to him, in the course of his book and from passages in the correspondence, he evidently paid numerous visits to different localities in his own country both before

[1] The same thing is related of Victor Hugo, whose father may very well have gained the notion from the Essays.

and after his marriage, and even proceeded as far as Navarre.

Between 1556 and 1563 an important incident occurred in the life of Montaigne, in the commencement of his romantic friendship with Etienne de la Boetie, whom he had met, as he tells us, by pure chance at some festive celebration in the town. From their very first interview the two found themselves drawn irresistibly close to one another; and during six years this alliance was foremost in the heart of Montaigne, as it was afterward in his memory, when death had severed it.

Although he blames severely in his own book[1] those who, contrary to the opinion of Aristotle, marry before five-and-thirty, Montaigne did not wait for the period fixed by the philosopher of Stageira; for in 1566, in his thirty-third year, he espoused Françoise de Chassaigne, daughter of a councillor in the Parliament of Bordeaux,[2] and two years later he lost his beloved father. The history of his early married life vies in obscurity with that of his youth. His biographers are not agreed among themselves; and in the same degree that he lays open to our view all that concerns his secret thoughts, the innermost mechanism of his mind, he observes too much reticence in respect to his public functions and conduct and his social relations. The title of Gentleman in Ordinary to the King, which he assumes in a preface, and which Henry III. gives him in a letter which we print a little farther on; what he says as to the commotions of courts, where he passed a portion of his life; the Instructions which he wrote under the dictation of Catherine de' Medici for King Charles IX., and

[1] Essays, i. 27.

[2] His father was married in 1528 at the same age. See *infra*, ii. 316.

his noble correspondence with Henry IV., leave no doubt, however, as to the part which he played in the transactions of those times, and we find an unanswerable proof of the esteem in which he was held by the most exalted personages in a letter which was addressed to him by Charles at the time he was admitted to the Order of St. Michel, which was, as he informs us himself, the highest honour of the French noblesse.

It is hardly worth while to discuss the statements which have been made in respect to the civil and military transactions of Montaigne. The earlier authorities, from the still greater dearth of material for a biography that exists to-day, formed very erroneous theories as to the public life of the Essayist, which, whatever might have been his personal wishes and tastes, was destined to be a very busy and eventful one. After the successive deaths of his father and eldest brother, however, he resigned, it is said, the post of Councillor, and having arrived at his thirty-eighth year, resolved to dedicate to study and contemplation the remaining term of his life. On his birthday, the last of February 1571, he caused a Latin inscription to be placed on one of the walls of his chateau to the effect, that in the year 1571, on the last of February, his birthday, weary of court life and charges, he, Michel de Montaigne, while in perfect health of body, withdrew into the society of the learned virgins for what remained to him of a career already more than half-spent. The vow was perchance sincere enough. How vain and unreal we shall presently and abundantly see; and yet when it was registered, it was not necessarily so, as the civil troubles had then not broken out, and Montaigne might think himself in a position to

treat soldiering as an agreeable retrospect, and to quote his favourites, Horace and Seneca, for "militavi non sine gloriâ," and "vivere militare est."

At the time to which we have come, Montaigne was unknown to the world of letters, except as a translator and an editor. In 1569 he had published a translation of the "Natural Theology" of Raymond de Sebonde, which he had solely undertaken to please his father. In 1571 he had caused to be printed at Paris certain *opuscula* of Etienne de la Boetie[1]; and these two efforts, inspired in one case by filial duty and in the other by friendship, prove that affectionate motives overruled with him mere personal ambition as a literary man. We may suppose that he began to compose the Essays at the very outset of his retirement from public engagements; for as, according to his own account, observes the President Bouhier, he cared neither for the chase, nor building, nor gardening, nor agricultural pursuits, and was (in the leisure snatched from public affairs) exclusively occupied with reading and reflection, he devoted himself with satisfaction to the task of setting down his thoughts just as they occurred to him. Those

[1] The name of Boetie has already occurred, and is to do so again and again. The admiration and enthusiasm of Montaigne for him was carried to a point which we, looking at what he has left behind him, can scarcely appreciate or share; but the two men had met, when they were both young, and the Essayist possibly discerned in his friend qualities which he did not live to develop or publicly manifest. The title of the volume of Miscellanies is: La Mesnagerie de Xenophon. Les Regles de Mariage de Plutarque. Lettre de consolation de Plutarque à sa femme. Le tout traduit de Grec en François par feu M. Estienne de la Boetie. Ensemble quelques Vers Latins et François, de son inuention. . . . Item, vn Discours sur la mort du dit Seigneur de la Boetie, par M. de Montaigne. 8vo, Paris, 1571. The *Apology of Sebonde*, which forms c. xii. of Book ii. of the Essays, was an outcome of the version of his work; its extent is out of proportion to the rest of the papers; it is long enough to have made a separate volume.

thoughts became a book, and the first edition of that book, which was to confer immortality on the writer, appeared at Bordeaux in 1580. The author presented a copy to his sovereign, who expressed himself extremely pleased by the gift. Montaigne intimated his gratification at such a feeling, and described the volume as merely giving an account of his own life and actions.

Montaigne was about fifty-seven ; he had suffered for some years past from renal colic and stone, to the latter of which maladies his father had been subject ; and it was with the necessity of distraction from his pain, and the hope of deriving relief from the waters, that he undertook at this time a great journey. As the account which he has left of his travels in Germany and Italy comprises some highly interesting particulars of his life and personal history, it seems worth while to furnish a sketch or analysis of it. The Essayist was accompanied not only by a secretary, but by his young brother, Bertrand-Charles de Montaigne, Sieur de Mattecoulon, a gentleman of the King of Navarre's privy chamber, and Michel's junior by many years, and by three other connections or intimate friends. From what we are able to glean of the composition of the household at Montaigne, it is a reasonable deduction that the Essayist employed foreign body-servants, from whom he collected much general information about Italy and other adjacent countries calculated to inspire him with a desire to become personally acquainted with foreign scenery and manners.

"The Journey, of which we proceed to describe the course simply," says the editor of the Itinerary, "had, from Beaumont-sur-Oise to Plombieres, in Lorraine, nothing sufficiently interesting to detain

us . . . we must go as far as Basle, of which we have a description, acquainting us with its physical and political condition at that period, as well as with the character of its baths. The passage of Montaigne through Switzerland is not without interest, as we see there how our philosophical traveller accommodated himself everywhere to the ways of the country. The hotels, the provisions, the Swiss cookery, everything was agreeable to him; it appears indeed, as if he preferred to the French manners and tastes those of the places he was visiting, and of which the simplicity and freedom (or frankness) accorded more with his own mode of life and thinking. In the towns where he stayed, Montaigne took care to see the Protestant divines, to make himself conversant with all their dogmas. He even held disputations with them occasionally.

"Having left Switzerland, he went to Isny, an imperial town, then on to Augsburg and Münich. He afterward proceeded to the Tyrol, where he was agreeably surprised, after the warnings which he had received, at the very slight inconveniences which he suffered, which gave him occasion to remark that he had all his life distrusted the statements of others respecting foreign countries, each person's taste being according to the notions of his native place; and that he had consequently set very little on what he was told beforehand.

"Upon his arrival at Botzen, Montaigne wrote to François Hotman[1] to say that he had been so pleased with his visit to Germany that he quitted it with great regret, although it was to go into Italy. He then passed through Branzoll, where he put up at the Rose Inn, and so on to Trent

[1] Montaigne might have made the acquaintance of Hotman through the resemblance of his political opinions to those of La Boetie.

or Trienta; thence going to Rovera; and here he first lamented the scarcity of crawfish, but made up for the loss by partaking of truffles cooked in oil and vinegar, oranges, citrons, and olives, in all of which he delighted."

After passing a restless night, when he bethought himself in the morning that there was some new town or district to be seen, he rose, we are told, with alacrity and pleasure. His secretary, to whom he dictated his Journal, assures us that he never saw him take so much interest in surrounding scenes and persons, and believes that the complete change helped to mitigate his sufferings in concentrating his attention on other points. When there was a complaint made that he had led his party out of the beaten route, and then returned very near the spot from which they started, his answer was that he had no settled course, and that he merely proposed to himself to pay visits to places which he had not seen, and so long as they could not convict him of traversing the same path twice, or revisiting a point already seen, he could perceive no harm in his plan. As to Rome, he cared less to go there, inasmuch as everybody went there; and he said that he never had a lacquey, who could not tell him all about Florence and Ferrara. He also would say that he seemed to himself like those who are reading some pleasant story or some fine book, of which they fear to come to an end: he felt so much pleasure in travelling that he dreaded the moment of arrival at the place, where they were to stop for the night.

We see that Montaigne travelled, just as he wrote, completely at his ease, and without the least constraint, turning, just as he fancied, from

the common or ordinary roads taken by tourists. The good inns, the soft beds, the fine views, attracted his notice at every point; and in his observations on men and things he confines himself chiefly to the practical side. The consideration of his health was constantly before him, and it was in consequence of this that, while at Venice, which disappointed him, he took occasion to note, for the benefit of readers, that he had an attack of colic, and that he evacuated two large stones after supper.

Nevertheless, his sojourn in the city was by no means unobservant or uninteresting. He remarked the absence of the use of side-arms there, which had been officially interdicted in consequence of the danger which the practice involved, of promoting fatal affrays in the streets; but he did not perhaps observe that many carried weapons under their cloaks.[1] His secretary makes him dwell a little on the splendour and excellent *status* of the *hetaira* at that time (1580), and there is in the Italian Diary a particular notice of the luxuriously appointed residence of the famous Imperia (Veronica Franco), who was openly visited by persons of the highest rank, and who possessed not only musical tastes, but a library of Latin and Italian books. We are told[2] that she presented Montaigne with a copy of her *Familiar Letters*, just newly published, as she had previously to Henry III., when he paid her a visit, given her *Sonnets*, and that the bearer of the gift received a douceur of two gold *scudi*—probably to his intense astonishment. It was during his stay in the east of Europe, that the Essayist enjoyed the opportunity of seeing the Turkish soldier, whose appearance and bearing

[1] Hazlitt's *Venetian Republic*, 1900, ii. 526.
[2] Bonnefon, *Montaigne*, 1893, p. 158.

struck him so forcibly that he recommended him as a model to his own countrymen. We observe that, after his return home, he arrived at the conclusion that Venice would be a good place for a residence in a man's declining years.

On quitting Venice he went in succession to Ferrara, where one of his party, M. d'Estissac, had letters of introduction to the Duke from the French King and Catherine de' Medici, and where Montaigne saw the unhappy Tasso, Rovigo, Padua, Bologna (where he had a stomach-ache), Florence, &c.; and everywhere, before alighting, he made it a rule to send some of his servants to ascertain where the best accommodation was to be had. He pronounced the Florentine women the finest in the world, but had not an equally good opinion of the food, which was less plentiful than in Germany, and not so well served. He lets us understand that in Italy they sent up dishes without dressing, but in Germany they were much better seasoned, and served with a variety of sauces and gravies. He remarked farther, that the glasses were singularly small and the wines insipid.

After dining with the Grand-Duke of Tuscany and his Duchess, the famous Bianca Cappello, who took, he noted, less water with her wine than the Duke, and paying a visit to Pisa in order to see an Aristotelian,[1] Montaigne passed rapidly over the intermediate country, which had no fascination for him, and arrived at Rome on the last day of November, entering by the Porta del Popolo, and putting up at the *Orso*. But he afterward hired, at twenty crowns a month, three fine furnished rooms in the house of a Spaniard, who included in

[1] See Essay 25 of First Book.

these terms the use of the kitchen fire. What most annoyed him in the Eternal City was the number of Frenchmen he met, who all saluted him in his native tongue; but otherwise he was very comfortable, and his stay extended to five months. A mind like his, full of grand classical recollections, could not fail to be profoundly impressed in the presence of the ruins at Rome, and he has enshrined in a magnificent passage of the Journal the feelings of the moment: "He said," writes his secretary, "that at Rome one saw nothing but the sky under which she had been built, and the outline of her site: that the knowledge we had of her was abstract, contemplative, not palpable to the actual senses: that those who said they beheld at least the ruins of Rome, went too far, for the ruins of so gigantic a structure must have commanded greater reverence—it was nothing but her sepulchre. The world, jealous of her prolonged empire, had in the first place broken to pieces that admirable body, and then, when they perceived that the remains attracted worship and awe, had buried the very wreck itself.[1] As to those small fragments which were still to be seen on the surface, notwithstanding the assaults of time and all other attacks, again and again repeated, they had been saved by fortune to be some slight evidence of that infinite grandeur which nothing could entirely distinguish. But it was likely that these disfigured remains were the least entitled to attention, and that the enemies of

[1] Compare a passage in one of Horace Walpole's letters to James West, 22nd March 1740 (Cunningham's edit. i. 41), where Walpole, speaking of Rome, describes her very ruins as ruined. But of late years, under the improved Italian Government, everything which is practicable is in gradual course of accomplishment toward the restoration of the ancient city, and a large number of important and surprising discoveries have been made.

that immortal renown, in their fury, had addressed themselves in the first instance to the destruction of what was most beautiful and worthiest of preservation; and that the buildings of this bastard Rome, raised upon the ancient productions, although they might excite the admiration of the present age, reminded him of crows' and sparrows' nests built in the walls and arches of the old churches, destroyed by the Huguenots. Again, he was apprehensive, seeing the space which this grave occupied, that the whole might not have been recovered, and that the burial itself had been buried. And, moreover, to see a wretched heap of rubbish, as pieces of tile and pottery, grow (as it had ages since) to a height equal to that of Mont Gurson,[1] and thrice the width of it, appeared to shew a conspiracy of destiny against the glory and pre-eminence of that city, affording at the same time a novel and extraordinary proof of its departed greatness. He (Montaigne) observed that it was difficult to believe, considering the limited area taken up by any of her seven hills, and particularly the two most favoured ones, the Capitoline and the Palatine, that so many buildings stood on the site. Judging only from what is left of the Temple of Concord, along the *Forum Romanum*, of which the fall seems quite recent, like that of some huge mountain split into horrible crags, it does not look as if more than two such edifices could have found room on the Capitoline, on which there were at one period from five-and-twenty to thirty temples, besides private dwellings. But, in point of fact, there is scarcely any probability of the views which we take of the city being correct, its plan and form having changed infinitely; for instance,

[1] In Perigord.

the *Velabrum*, which, on account of its depressed level, received the sewage of the city and had a lake, has been raised by artificial accumulation to a height with the other hills, and Monte Savello has, in truth, grown simply out of the ruins of the theatre of Marcellus. He believed that an ancient Roman would not recognise the place again. It often happened that in digging down into the earth the workmen came upon the crown of some lofty column, which, though thus buried, was still standing upright. The people there have no recourse to other foundations than the vaults and arches of the old houses, upon which, as on slabs of rock, they raise their modern palaces. It is easy to see that several of the ancient streets are thirty feet below those at present in use."

Sceptical as Montaigne shews himself in his book, yet during his sojourn at Rome he manifested a great regard for religion. He solicited the honour of being admitted to kiss the feet of the Holy Father, Gregory XIII.; and the Pontiff exhorted him always to continue in the devotion which he had hitherto exhibited to the Church and the service of the Most Christian King.

"After this, one sees," says the editor of the Journal, that construable piece of filial homage, "Montaigne employing all his time in making excursions about the neighbourhood on horseback or on foot, in visits, in observations of every kind. The churches, the stations, the processions, even the sermons; then the palaces, the vineyards, the gardens, the public amusements, as the Carnival, &c.—nothing was overlooked. He saw a Jewish child circumcised, and wrote down a most minute account of the operation. He met at San Sisto a Muscovite ambassador, the second who had come

to Rome since the pontificate of Paul III. This minister had despatches from his court for Venice, addressed to the *Grand Governor of the Signory*. The court of Muscovy had at that time such limited relations with the other powers of Europe, and it was so imperfect in its information, that it thought Venice to be a dependency of the Holy See."

Of all the particulars with which he has furnished us during his stay at Rome, the following passage in reference to the Essays is not the least singular: "The Master of the Sacred Palace returned him his Essays, castigated in accordance with the views of the learned monks. 'He had only been able to form a judgment of them,' said he, 'through a certain French monk, not understanding French himself'"—we leave Montaigne himself to tell the story—"and he received so complacently my excuses and explanations on each of the passages which had been animadverted upon by the French monk, that he concluded by leaving me at liberty to revise the text agreeably to the dictates of my own conscience. I begged him, on the contrary, to abide by the opinion of the person who had criticised me, confessing, among other matters, as, for example, in my use of the word *fortune*,[1] in quoting historical poets, in my apology for Julian, in my animadversion on the theory that he who prayed ought to be exempt from vicious inclinations for the time being; *item*, in my estimate of cruelty, as something beyond simple death; *item*, in my view that a child ought to be brought up to do everything, and so on; that these were my opinions, which I did not think wrong; as to other things, I said that the corrector understood not my meaning.

[1] See vol. ii. p. 55, and vol. v. p. 54.

The Master, who is a clever man, made many excuses for me, and gave me to suppose that he did not concur in the suggested improvements; and pleaded very ingeniously for me in my presence against another (also an Italian), who opposed my sentiments."

Such is what passed between Montaigne and these two personages at that time; but when the Essayist was leaving, and went to bid them farewell, they used very different language to him. "They prayed me," says he, "to pay no attention to the censure passed on my book, in which other French persons had apprised them that there were many foolish things; adding, that they honoured my affectionate intention toward the Church and my capacity; and had so high an opinion of my candour and conscientiousness that they should leave it to me to make such alterations as were proper in the book, when I reprinted it; among other things, the word *fortune*. To excuse themselves for what they had said against my book, they instanced works of our time by cardinals and other divines of excellent repute which had been blamed for similar faults, which in no way affected the reputation of the author, or of the publication as a whole; they requested me to lend the church the support of my eloquence (this was their fair speech), and to make a longer stay in the place, where I should be free from all farther intrusion on their part. It seemed to me that we parted very good friends."[1]

Before quitting Rome, Montaigne received his diploma of citizenship, by which he was greatly

[1] Curiously enough, the Essays were put into the *Index Expurgatorius* as late as 1676, and prohibited "ubicunque et quocunque idiomate impressus."—Bonnefon, *Montaigne*, 1893, p. 297.

flattered[1]; and after a visit to Tivoli he set out for Loretto, stopping at Ancona, Fano, and Urbino. He arrived at the beginning of May 1581 at Bagno-a-Corsena, near Lucca,[2] where he established himself, in order to try the famous waters. There, we find in the Journal, of his own accord the Essayist lived in the strictest conformity with the regime, and henceforth we only hear of his diet, the effect which the waters had by degrees upon his system, of the manner in which he took them: in a word, he does not omit an item of the circumstances connected with his daily routine, his habit of body, his baths, and the rest. It was no longer the journal of a traveller which he kept, but the diary of an invalid,[3] attentive to the minutest details of the cure which he was endeavouring to accomplish: a sort of memorandum book, in which he was noting down everything that he felt and did, for the benefit of his medical man at home, who would have the care of his health on his return, and the attendance on his subsequent infirmities. Montaigne gives it as his reason and

[1] See it inserted *in extenso* in Bk. iii. ch. 9, as part of the text, where an English translation accompanies it. In 1882 the Municipality of Rome let into the wall of the Hotel dell' Orso a marble tablet with the following inscription: "S.P.Q.R. In this ancient hostelry lived the French moralist Montaigne, author of the *Livre des Sages*, which contributed so much to the progress of the new philosophy. The Roman Senate conferred upon him the rights of a citizen of Rome."

[2] "Montaigne relates in his *Travels* (t. iii. p. 51) an instance of how the mind may be cultivated, particularly in poetry, by persons ignorant of the art of reading and writing. His Lucchese improvisatrice may be regarded as a match for the ancient rhapsodists."—St. John's *Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece*, 1842, i. 110.

[3] "I am reading Montaigne's *Travels*, which have lately been found. There is little in them but the baths and medicines he took, and what he had everywhere for dinner."—*Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann*, June 8, 1774. For the Essays it is scarcely probable that Walpole would have had any greater relish. They were completely antipodal to his own writings and sentiments.

justification for enlarging to this extent here, that he had omitted, to his regret, to do so in his visits to other baths, which might have saved him the trouble of writing at such great length now; but it is perhaps a better reason in our eyes, that what he wrote he wrote for his own use.

We find in these accounts, however, many touches which are valuable as illustrating the manners of the place. The greater part of the entries in the Journal, giving the account of these waters, and of the travels, down to Montaigne's arrival at the first French town on his homeward route, are in Italian, because he wished to exercise himself in that language.

The minute and constant watchfulness of Montaigne over his health and over himself might lead one to suspect that excessive fear of death which degenerates into cowardice. But was it not rather the fear of the operation for the stone, at that time really formidable? Or perhaps he was of the same way of thinking with the Greek poet, of whom Cicero reports this saying: "I do not desire to die; but the thought of being dead is indifferent to me." Let us hear, however, what he says himself on this point very frankly: "It would be too weak and unmanly on my part if, certain as I am of always finding myself in the position of having to succumb in that way,[1] and death coming nearer and nearer to me, I did not make some effort, before the time came, to bear the trial with fortitude. For reason prescribes that we should joyfully accept what it may please God to send us. Therefore the only remedy, the only rule, and the sole doctrine for avoiding the evils by which mankind is surrounded, whatever they are, is to resolve to bear them so

[1] To the stone or gravel.

far as our nature permits, or to put an end to them courageously and promptly."

He was still at Bagno when, on the 7th September 1581, he learned by letter that he had been elected Mayor of Bordeaux on the 1st August preceding. This intelligence made him hasten his departure; and from Lucca he proceeded to Rome. He again made some stay in that city, and he there received the letter of the jurats of Bordeaux, notifying to him officially his election to the mayoralty, and inviting him to return as speedily as possible. He left for France, accompanied by young D'Estissac and several other gentlemen, who escorted him a considerable distance; but none went back to France with him, not even his travelling companion. He passed by Padua, Milan, Mont Cenis, and Chambery; thence he went on to Lyons, and lost no time in repairing to his chateau, after an absence of seventeen months and eight days.

"The gentlemen of Bordeaux," says he, "elected me Mayor of their town while I was at a distance from France, and far from the thought of such a thing. I excused myself; but they gave to understand that I was wrong in so doing, it being also the command of the King that I should stand." This is the letter which Henry III. wrote to him on the occasion:

"Monsieur de Montaigne,—Inasmuch as I hold in great esteem your fidelity and zealous devotion to my service, it has been a pleasure to me to learn that you have been chosen mayor of my town of Bordeaux, having had the agreeable duty of confirming the selection, which I did so much the more willingly, seeing that it was made without intrigue and in your distant absence. Wherefore my intention is, and I command and enjoin you

expressly, that you return without delay or excuse, as soon as the present letter is delivered to you, to do the duties and service of the charge to which you have received so legitimate a call. And you will do a thing which will be very agreeable to me, and the contrary would displease me greatly. Praying God, M. de Montaigne, to have you in His holy keeping.

"Written at Paris, the 25th day of November 1581.

"HENRI.

"À Monsieur de MONTAIGNE,
Knight of my Order,[1] Gentleman in Ordinary of my Chamber, being at present in Rome."

Montaigne, in his new employment, the most important in the province, obeyed the axiom that a man may not refuse a duty, though it absorb his time and attention, and even involve the sacrifice of his blood. Placed between two extreme parties, ever on the point of getting to blows, he shewed himself in practice what he is in his book, the friend of a middle and temperate policy. Tolerant by character and on principle, he belonged, like all the great minds of the sixteenth century, to that political sect which sought to improve, without destroying, institutions; and we may say of him, what he himself said of La Boetie, "that he had that maxim indelibly impressed on his mind, to obey and submit himself religiously to the laws under which he was born. Affectionately attached to the repose of his country, an enemy to changes and innovations, he would have preferred to employ what means he had toward their discouragement and suppression, than in promoting their success." Such was the platform of their administration.

[1] See *supra*, p. xxiii.

He applied himself in an especial manner to the maintenance of peace between the two religious factions which at that time divided the town of Bordeaux. In July 1583, on his personal intercession, Henry III. repealed the customs duties (*traite foraine*) hitherto payable by ships loading and unloading at that port[1]; and in the same year his grateful fellow-citizens renewed the mayoralty in his person for a farther term of two years, a distinction which had been enjoyed, he tells us, only in two prior cases. On the expiration of his official career, after four years' duration, he could say fairly enough of himself, that he left behind him neither hatred nor cause of offence. But we do not know whether he obtained the preferment mentioned in the letter of 1583, from which he augured the receipt by the King of (no doubt complimentary) presents of game and poultry.

Numerous letters to the Maréchal de Matignon, the Jurats of Bordeaux, and others, as well as communications from correspondents which have been successively brought to light, attest the activity and appreciation of Montaigne as a public man during the troublous and difficult years 1584 and 1585, and seem to suggest the eminent probability that he wrote others not hitherto recovered. This correspondence presents him in an aspect forcibly contrasting with his quiet and secluded life at his chateau amid his books and literary avocations, and exhibits a complete reversal of the dedication of his future years in 1571 to learned repose among the Muses; but, if the attribution be a correct one, he farther distinguished his term of office by penning a Representation of the Authorities at Bordeaux on the occasion of the opening of the Court of Justice

[1] See Letter X.

there in January 1582-83.[1] The peculiar structure of the piece seems to betray its origin, and it could scarcely have been issued without the concurrence at least of the Mayor.

In the midst of the cares of government, however, Montaigne found leisure to revise and enlarge his Essays, which, since their appearance in 1580, were continually receiving augmentations in the form of additional chapters or papers. Two more editions were printed in 1582 and 1587; and during this time the author, while making alterations in the original text, had composed part of the Third Book. He went to Paris to make arrangements for the publication of his enlarged labours; and a fourth impression in 1588 was the result. He remained in the capital some time on this occasion, and it was now that he met for the first time Mademoiselle Le Jars de Gournay. Gifted with an active and inquiring spirit, and, above all, possessing a sound and healthy tone of mind, Mademoiselle de Gournay had been carried from her childhood with that tide which set in with the sixteenth century toward controversy, learning, and knowledge. She learned Latin without a master; and when, at the age of eighteen, she accidentally became possessor of a copy of the Essays, she was transported with delight and admiration. She was now about twenty.

She quitted the chateau of Gournay-sur-Aronde in Picardy to come and see him. We cannot do better, in connection with this journey of sympathy, than to repeat the words of Pasquier: "That

[1] De L'Œil des Rois et de la Jvstice. Remonstrance faite en la ville de Bordeaux à l'ouuerture de la Cour de Justice enuoyee par le Roy en ses païs & Duché de Guienne. 8°. Paris, 1584. The publication at Paris two years after the event may have been due to the visit of Montaigne to the capital.

young lady, allied to several great and noble families of Paris, proposed to herself no other marriage than with her honour, enriched with the knowledge gained from good books, and, beyond all others, from the essays of M. de Montaigne, who making in the year 1588 a lengthened stay in the town of Paris, she went there for the purpose of forming his personal acquaintance; and her mother, Madame de Gournay, and herself took him back with them to their chateau, where, at two or three different times, he spent three months altogether, most welcome of visitors." It was from this moment that Mademoiselle de Gournay dated her adoption as Montaigne's daughter, a circumstance which has tended to confer immortality upon her in a far greater measure than her own literary productions. Mr. St. John has supplied a few other interesting particulars of the relations between the Essayist and this singular young woman, as well as of her subsequent fortunes. In the posthumous edition of the Essays, 1595, livre i. chap. 40, the author particularly commemorates this notable meeting. It was during the temporary sojourn of Montaigne at Paris, when the enlarged impression of his Essays was in the press, that he became for a short time, by a curious *contretemps*, an inmate of the Bastille. He was almost immediately released through the offices of the queen-mother; but he did not recollect to modify the passage in his book, where he disclaims having ever seen the interior of a prison. He tells us himself that he was arrested between three and four in the afternoon, and liberated at eight in the evening.

Montaigne, on leaving Paris, stayed a short time at Blois, to attend the meeting of the States-General. We do not know what part he took in

that assembly; but it is known that he was commissioned, about this period, to negotiate between Henry of Navarre (afterward Henry IV.) and the Duc de Guise. De Thou assures us that Montaigne enjoyed the confidence of the principal persons of his time. He calls him a frank man without constraint, and tells us that, walking with him and Pasquier in the court at the Castle of Blois, he heard him pronounce some very remarkable opinions on contemporary events, and adds that Montaigne had foreseen that the troubles in France could not end without witnessing the death of either the King of Navarre or of the Duc de Guise. He had made himself so completely master of the views of these two princes, that he told De Thou that the King of Navarre would have been prepared to embrace Catholicism, if he had not been afraid of being abandoned by his party, and that the Duc de Guise, on his part, had no particular repugnance to the Confession of Augsburg, for which the Cardinal de Lorraine, his uncle, had inspired him with a liking, if it had not been for the peril involved in quitting the Romish communion. For the present, Montaigne returned to his chateau, where he could carry out his motto, *Otio et libertati*, and compose a chapter for his next edition on The Inconveniences of Greatness.

The author of the Essays was now fifty-five. The hereditary complaint which tormented him grew only worse and worse with years; and in 1588, while he was in Paris, he had had in addition an attack of gout in his left foot. During the wars of the League he had exposed himself to a vast amount of fatigue and exertion; in 1585 he is heard appealing for consideration on account of his old age; and his correspondence, at present readable in an ampler form, establishes him beyond

doubt as one of the principal actors in the busy and critical period which preceded the accession of Henry IV. to the French throne. This is to be predicated of his public career: that he never flinched from his duty even when the discharge involved severe toil and considerable expense, and that he was regarded by all with whom he came into official contact with confidence and respect; and yet he occupied himself at all spare intervals with reading, meditating, and composition, which doubtless did not fail to exercise the usual effect of a too sedentary life. He employed the years 1589, 1590, and 1591 in making fresh editions to his book; and he might have fairly anticipated many happy hours, when he was unexpectedly attacked by a new and yet more lethal enemy—quinsy, depriving him of the power of utterance. Pasquier, who has left us some details of his last hours, obtained, it is presumable, from some witness of the scene, narrates that he remained three days in full possession of his faculties, but unable to speak, so that, in order to make known his desires, he was obliged to resort to writing; and as he felt his end drawing near, he begged his wife to summon certain of the gentlemen who resided in the neighbourhood to bid them a last farewell. When they had arrived, he caused mass to be celebrated in his apartment; and just as the priest was elevating the host, Montaigne fell forward, with his arms extended in front of him, on the bed, and so expired.[1] He was in his sixtieth year. It was the 13th September 1592.

[1] The great Bacon is said to have died with equal suddenness in the arms of his friend Sir Julius Cæsar, but Montaigne's own friend, Charron, came to an end more closely resembling that of the Essayist. The probability seems to be that the proximate cause of death in this case was the anguish from an attack of stone affecting the heart. His father, who was subject to the same malady, had once similarly swooned in his arms.

Montaigne was buried near his own house; but a few months after his decease, his remains were removed to the Church of the Feuillants at Bordeaux, where they still continued till 1871, when they were finally removed to the vestibule of the Hall of Faculties. But the vessel containing the heart of the Essayist, originally deposited in the Church of Saint Michel de Montaigne, has not been recovered.

The Essayist lived in easy circumstances, his income, which represented only, we must recollect, a portion of the whole paternal fortune,[1] being about 6000 francs a year, and he left a large sum in land and money—90,000 francs. The property, which shared the general fortune of all French estates prior to modern improvements, and was, no doubt, relatively unprofitable, has repeatedly changed hands, and would be probably worth at the present time at least half a million of francs.

The family of Eyquem, in truth, had had a lengthened commercial experience and record; and so far down as the time of Pierre the father the house still continued to devote close attention to practical affairs, and chiefly resided at Bordeaux, where Pierre, following the precedent of his ancestors, engaged in the shipping and export trade, as well as in any other undertakings calculated to prove profitable. The elder Montaigne, who enjoyed the entire revenue, must have had a very affluent independence. But his eldest son seems, agreeably to the view and principle laid down in one of the Essays, to have had an income allowed to him *vitâ patris*.[2]

[1] It was divided between Montaigne and his relatives, the widow remaining at the chateau, but not as mistress.

[2] See *infra*, ii. 312.

He tells us in one passage of his book, that his father apprehended diminution of the estate from his want of aptitude for business; "but," says Montaigne, "it did not so happen," and he even improved matters.

Montaigne was in one sense the first gentleman of his race, unless the crusader was of the same blood. But it was a puerile trait on the part of Joseph Scaliger to stigmatise him as the son of a herring-salesman; nor was it inopportune, granting such a thing, to congratulate all such dealers, past, present, and to come, on such an egregious accession of honour.

In 1595 Mademoiselle de Gournay published a new edition of Montaigne's Essays, and the first with the latest emendations of the author, from a copy examined and set in order by the poet Pierre de Brach, and forwarded to the lady at Paris by Mme. de Montaigne in the March of 1594. But in the same year the Lyons press brought out a reprint of the text of 1588 in duodecimo form, probably an independent *contrefaçon*; and its main curiosity is the presence on the title of a striking appreciation of the author, which reads as if it were the product of the pen of some anonymous admirer. We are here apprised that the Essays contain "vn riche et rare thresor de plusieurs beaux et notables discours couchez en vn stile le plus pur et orné qu'il se trouve en nostre siècle."[1]

Whatever may have been the general reception

[1] How little this elaborate panegyric would have fallen in with the author's humour and taste, we may to some extent judge from the concluding sentence of Essay 39 of Book the First, where he is complaining of the introduction of the too numerous titles of honour in vogue. He adds: "Ie trouue pareillement de mauuaise grace d'en charger le front et inscriptions des liures, que nous faisons imprimer." Nevertheless, in the Bordeaux *editio princeps* of 1580 he does not omit to let his Court honours follow his name.

of Montaigne's literary productions by the generation immediately succeeding his own age, his genius grew into just esteem in the seventeenth century, when such great spirits arose as La Bruyère, Molière, La Fontaine, Madame de Sévigné. "O," exclaimed the Chatelaine des Rochers, "what capital company he is, the dear man! he is my old friend; and just for the reason that he is so, he always seems new. My God! how full is that book of sense!"[1] Balzac said that he had carried human reason as far and as high as it could go, both in politics and in morals. On the other hand, Malebranche and the writers of Port Royal were against him; some reprehended the licentiousness of his writings; others their impiety, materialism, epicureanism. Even Pascal, who had carefully read the Essays, and gained no small profit by them, did not spare his reproaches. But Montaigne has outlived detraction. As time has gone on, his admirers and borrowers have increased in number, and his Jansenism, which recommended him to the eighteenth century, may not be his least recommendation in the twentieth. Here we have certainly, on the whole, a first-class man, and one proof of his masterly genius seems to be, that his merits and his beauties are sufficient to induce us to leave out of consideration blemishes and faults which would have been fatal to an inferior writer.

The books which constituted the library of Montaigne occasionally occur, and bear his autograph; he probably possessed a fairly large collection, as he informs us in his Essay 30 of the First Book, that he had a hundred volumes of the Italian Letter-writers alone; and he speaks elsewhere of being surrounded by thousands of works. But since

[1] Comp. ii. 326.

he resided and composed his Essays at a distance from any other collection, a catalogue might be experimentally drawn up from the references to authors consulted by him, and probably all in his hands. No two writers could have been more different in their style and method, though occasionally so parallel in their thoughts, than Montaigne and Shakespear. The former lived at a distance from books, and was obliged to retain them at his elbow for reference and quotation, of which he was inordinately prodigal. Shakespear lived in the midst of them, kept nothing or next to nothing, and instead of transcribing sentences, not to say entire paragraphs from others, reproduced the matter chemically transformed—sometimes so much so as to be barely recognisable.

In his Essays, 1600, Sir William Cornwallis the Younger was the first person in England to call attention to the merits of Montaigne, and the subject evidently interested him, since he left behind him in MS. an epigram first inserted by the editor in a privately printed volume of poetical miscellanies.[1] This production runs as follows :—

Upon Montaigne's Essays.

"Come, Montaigne, come, I'll love thee with my heart;
We may not part.
I'll hearken: thou shalt sing of Nature's King,
Music's chief part.
Union's division to discover to the lover,
Rarest of art."

It is sufficiently curious that Cornwallis speaks of having seen some of the Essays in English before Florio succeeded in printing his version, for he observes: "For profitable recreation, that

[1] *Inedited Poetical Miscellanies*, 8vo, 1870. Only fifty copies printed.

noble knight, the Lord de Montaigne, is most excellent, whom, though I have not been so much beholding to the French as to see in his original, yet divers of his pieces I have seen translated, they that understand both languages say very well done; and I am able to say (if you will take the word of ignorance) translated into a style admitting as few idle words as our language will endure. It is well fitted in this new garment, and Montaigne now speaks good English. It is done by a fellow less beholding to nature for his fortune than wit, yet lesser for his face than his fortune. The truth is, he looks more like a good fellow than a wise man, and yet he is wise beyond either his fortune or education."

Thus Cornwallis, prior to 1600, had seen not only parts of the book, but the translator; and as Florio was at one time in the service of Lord Southampton as a tutor, there is the special probability that Shakespear may have had the opportunity of glancing at the MS. But this aspect of the question is treated more at large in my *New Essay on Shakespear*, where I shew some warrant for a new view of the matter.

The translation by Florio, completed some years before it found a publisher, appeared in 1603 and was reprinted in 1613 and 1632; and readers had to wait more than half a century more for the idiomatic but loose and treacherous version by Cotton, which passed through several impressions.

I notice merely for the sake of the slight indication which it affords of an increasing call for the book, that in 1701 we meet with a small duodecimo volume entitled: "An Abstract of the most curious and excellent Thoughts in Seigneur de Montaigne's Essays. Very useful for improving the Mind and

forming the manners of Men." This effort was well meant, but the essential point about the Essays seems to be their possession and perusal in all their full and even garrulous detail. Doubtless the Cotton version, periodically republished down to 1743, at once helped to diffuse a knowledge of the Essays in a far greater measure than the Florio one; and allusions in such books as Spence's *Anecdotes* shew that Montaigne was known to the literary circle in which Pope and Addison moved.

LETTERS OF MONTAIGNE[1]

I

To Messire ANTOINE DU PRAT, *Provost of Paris.*

I put you in possession, Monsieur, by my last letter of the troubles which desolated the Agenois and Perigord, where our common friend Mesney, taken prisoner, was brought to Bordeaux, and had his head cut off. I wish to tell you now that those of Nerac, having by the indiscretion of the young captain of this town, lost from a hundred to a hundred and twenty men in a skirmish against a troop of Monluc, withdrew into Bearn with their ministers, not without great danger of their lives, about the fifteenth day of July, at which time those of Castel Jalous

[1] The five-and-thirty letters here given (inclusively of the *Memorial* of 1583) represent all that are known to exist. In 1842 only ten appear to have been recovered. The earlier letters are generally signed *Michel de Montaigne*, although in 1568 the Essayist had already succeeded to the family estates. The later letters bear the signature *Montaigne*. The object in printing this correspondence was in principal measure to illustrate the active and practical side of the character of the writer. It is to be predicated of the composition, orthography, and punctuation that they betray a tendency to haste and a negligent and incompact arrangement of sentences, as well as an indifference to the choice of expressions. We perceive that the letter to Du Prat had been preceded by at least one other. But the family has not preserved it or them. It should be added that the latest French Variorum gives only thirty letters, and that search has been unsuccessfully made in many probable directions, here and abroad, for others evidently once in existence. In the 39th chapter of the First Book of the Essays, Montaigne has entered at considerable length into the art of letter-writing and into his views on some of the aspects of the question, and we need not wonder or complain that the practical statesman and the philosophical theorist are not always unanimous or consistent.

surrendered, of which place the minister was executed. Those of Marmande, Saint Macaire, and Bazas fled likewise, but not without a cruel loss, for immediately the chateau of Duras was pillaged, and that of Monseigneur Villette was forced, where there were two citizens and a large number of churchmen. There every cruelty and violence were exercised, the first day of August, without regard to quality, sex, or age. Monluc violated the daughter of the minister, who was slain with the others. I am extremely sorry to tell you that in this massacre were involved our kinswoman, the wife of Gaspard Duprat, and two of her children; it was a noble woman, whom I have had opportunities of often seeing when I went into those parts, and at whose house I was always assured of enjoying good hospitality. In short, I say no more to you at present, for the recital causes me severe pain, and therefore I pray God to have you in His holy keeping.—Your servant and good friend,

MONTAIGNE.

This 24 August 1562.

II

To Monseigneur, Monseigneur DE MONTAIGNE *(his Father).* [1563.]

. . . [1] *As to his last words, doubtless, if any man can give a good account of them, it is I, both because, during the whole of his sickness he conversed as fully with me as with any one, and also because, in consequence of the singular and brotherly friendship which we had entertained for each other, I was perfectly*

[1] This account of the death of La Boetie begins imperfectly. It first appeared in a little volume of Miscellanies in 1571. It must have been written shortly after the death of Boetie in 1563. The elder Montaigne died in 1568.

acquainted with the intentions, opinions, and wishes which he had formed in the course of his life, as much so, certainly, as one man can possibly be with those of another man; and because I knew them to be elevated, virtuous, full of steady resolution, and (after all said) admirable. I well foresaw that, if his illness permitted him to express himself, he would allow nothing to fall from him, in such an extremity, that was not replete with good example. I consequently took every care in my power to treasure what was said. True it is, Monseigneur, as my memory is not only in itself very short, but in this case affected by the trouble which I have undergone, through so heavy and important a loss, that I have forgotten a number of things which I should wish to have had known; but those which I recollect shall be related to you as exactly as lies in my power. For to represent in full measure his noble career suddenly arrested, to paint to you his indomitable courage, in a body worn out and prostrated by pain and the assaults of death, I confess, would demand a far better ability than mine: because, although, when in former years he discoursed on serious and important matters, he handled them in such a manner that it was difficult to reproduce exactly what he said, yet his ideas and his words at the last seemed to rival each other in serving him. For I am sure that I never knew him give birth to such fine conceptions, or display so much eloquence, as in the time of his sickness. If, Monseigneur, you blame me for introducing his more ordinary observations, please to know that I do so advisedly; for since they proceeded from him at a season of such great trouble, they indicate the perfect tranquillity of his mind and thoughts to the last.

On Monday, the 9th day of August 1563, *on my return from the Court, I sent an invitation to him to*

come and dine with me. He returned word that he was obliged, but, being indisposed, he would thank me to do him the pleasure of spending an hour with him before he started for Medoc. Shortly after my dinner I went to him. He had laid himself down on the bed with his clothes on, and he was already, I perceived, much changed. He complained of diarrhœa, accompanied by the gripes, and said that he had it about him ever since he played with M. d'Escars with nothing but his doublet on, and that with him a cold often brought on such attacks. I advised him to go as he had proposed, but to stay for the night at Germignac, which is only about two leagues from the town. I gave him this advice, because some houses, near to that where he was living, were visited by the plague, about which he was nervous since his return from Perigord and the Agenois, where it had been raging; and, besides, horse exercise was, from my own experience, beneficial under similar circumstances. He set out accordingly, with his wife and M. Bouillhonnas, his uncle.

Early on the following morning, however, I had intelligence from Madame de la Boetie, that in the night he had a fresh and violent attack of dysentery. She had called in a physician and apothecary, and prayed me to lose no time in coming, which (after dinner) I did. He was delighted to see me; and when I was going away, under promise to return the following day, he begged me more importunately and affectionately than he was wont to do, to give him as much of my company as possible. I was a little affected; yet I was about to leave, when Madame de la Boetie, as if she foresaw something about to happen, implored me with tears to stay the night. When I consented, he seemed to grow more cheerful. I returned home the next day, and on the Thursday I

paid him another visit. He had become worse; and his loss of blood from the dysentery, which reduced his strength very much, was largely on the increase. I quitted his side on Friday, but on Saturday I went to him, and found him very weak. He then gave me to understand that his complaint was infectious, and, moreover, disagreeable and depressing; and that he, knowing thoroughly my constitution, desired that I should content myself with coming to see him now and then. On the contrary, after that I never left his side.

It was only on the Sunday that he began to converse with me on any subject beyond the immediate one of his illness, and what the ancient doctors thought of it: we had not touched on public affairs, for I found at the very outset that he had a dislike to them.

But, on the Sunday, he had a fainting fit; and when he came to himself, he told me that everything seemed to him confused, as if in a mist and in disorder, and that, nevertheless, this visitation was not unpleasing to him. "Death," I replied, "has no worse sensation, my brother." "None so bad," was his answer. He had had no regular sleep since the beginning of his illness; and as he became worse and worse, he began to turn his attention to questions which men commonly occupy themselves with in the last extremity, despairing now of getting better, and intimating as much to me. On that day, as he appeared in tolerably good spirits, I took occasion to say to him that, in consideration of the singular love I bore him, it would become me to take care that his affairs, which he had conducted with such rare prudence in his life, should not be neglected at present; and that I should regret it if, from want of proper counsel, he should leave anything unsettled, not only

on account of the loss to his family, but also to his good name.

He thanked me for my kindness; and after a little reflection, as if he was resolving certain doubts in his own mind, he desired me to summon his uncle and his wife by themselves, in order that he might acquaint them with his testamentary dispositions. I told him that this would shock them. "No, no," he answered, "I will cheer them by making out my case to be better than it is." And then, he inquired whether we were not all much taken by surprise at his having fainted? I replied, that it was of no importance, being incidental to the complaint from which he suffered. "True, my brother," said he; "it would be unimportant, even though it should lead to what you most dread." "For you," I rejoined, "it might be a happy thing; but I should be the loser, who would thereby be deprived of so great, so wise, and so steadfast a friend, a friend whose place I should never see supplied." "It is very likely you may not," was his answer; "and be sure that one thing which makes me somewhat anxious to recover, and to delay my journey to that place, whither I am already half-way gone, is the thought of the loss both you and that poor man and woman there (referring to his uncle and wife) must sustain; for I love them with my whole heart, and I feel certain that they will find it very hard to lose me. I should also regret it on account of such as have, in my lifetime, valued me, and whose conversation I should like to have enjoyed a little longer; and I beseech you, my brother, if I leave the world, to carry to them for me an assurance of the esteem I entertained for them to the last moment of my existence. My birth was, moreover, scarcely to so little purpose but that, had I lived, I might have done some service to the public;

but, however this may be, I am prepared to submit to the will of God, when it shall please Him to call me, being confident of enjoying the tranquillity which you have foretold for me. As for you, my friend, I feel sure that you are so wise, that you will control your emotions, and submit to His divine ordinance regarding me; and I beg of you to see that that good man and woman do not mourn for my departure unnecessarily."

He proceeded to inquire how they behaved at present. "Very well," said I, "considering the circumstances." "Ah!" he replied, "that is, so long as they do not abandon all hope of me; but when that shall be the case, you will have a hard task to support them." It was owing to his strong regard for his wife and uncle that he studiously disguised from them his own conviction as to the certainty of his end, and he prayed me to do the same. When they were near him he assumed an appearance of gaiety, and flattered them with hopes. I then went to call them. They came, wearing as composed an air as possible; and when we four were together, he addressed us, with an untroubled countenance, as follows: "Uncle and wife, rest assured that no new attack of my disease, or fresh doubt that I have as to my recovery, has led me to take this step of communicating to you my intentions, for, thank God, I feel very well and hopeful; but taught by observation and experience the instability of all human things, and even of the life to which we are so much attached, and which is, nevertheless, a mere bubble; and knowing, moreover, that my state of health brings me more within the danger of death, I have thought proper to settle my worldly affairs, having the benefit of your advice." Then addressing himself more particularly to his uncle, "Good uncle," said he, "if I were to rehearse all the obligations

under which I lie to you, I am sure that I never should make an end. Let me only say that, wherever I have been, and with whomsoever I have conversed, I have represented you as doing for me all that a father could do for a son: both in the care with which you tended my education, and in the zeal with which you pushed me forward into public life, so that my whole existence is a testimony of your good offices towards me. In short, I am indebted for all that I have to you, who have been to me as a parent; and therefore I have no right to part with anything, unless it be with your approval."

There was a general silence hereupon, and his uncle was prevented from replying by tears and sobs. At last he said that whatever he thought for the best would be agreeable to him; and as he intended to make him his heir, he was at liberty to dispose of what would be his.

Then he turned to his wife. "My image," said he (for so he often called her, there being some sort of relationship between them), "since I have been united to you by marriage, which is one of the most weighty and sacred ties imposed on us by God, for the purpose of maintaining human society, I have continued to love, cherish, and value you; and I know that you have returned my affection, for which I have no sufficient acknowledgment. I beg you to accept such portion of my estate as I bequeath to you, and be satisfied with it, though it is very inadequate to your desert."

Afterwards he turned to me. "My brother," he began, "for whom I have so entire a love, and whom I selected out of so large a number, thinking to revive with you that virtuous and sincere friendship which, owing to the degeneracy of the age, has grown to be almost unknown to us, and now exists only in certain vestiges of antiquity, I beg of you, as a mark of my

affection to you, to accept my library: a slender offering, but given with a cordial will, and suitable to you, seeing that you are fond of learning. It will be a memorial of your old companion."

Then he addressed all three of us. He blessed God that in his extremity he had the happiness to be surrounded by all those whom he held dearest in the world, and he looked upon it as a fine spectacle, where four persons were together, so unanimous in their feelings, and loving each other for each other's sake. He commended us one to the other; and proceeded thus: "My worldly matters being arranged, I must now think of the welfare of my soul. I am a Christian; I am a Catholic. I have lived one, and I shall die one. Send for a priest; for I wish to conform to this last Christian obligation." He now concluded his discourse, which he had conducted with such a firm face and with so distinct an utterance, that whereas, when I first entered his room, he was feeble, inarticulate in his speech, his pulse low and feverish, and his features pallid, now, by a sort of miracle, he appeared to have rallied, and his pulse was so strong that for the sake of comparison, I asked him to feel mine.

I felt my heart so oppressed at this moment, that I had not the power to make him any answer; but in the course of two or three hours, solicitous to keep up his courage, and, likewise, out of the tenderness which I had had all my life for his honour and fame, wishing a larger number of witnesses to his admirable fortitude, I said to him, how much I was ashamed to think that I lacked courage to listen to what he, so great a sufferer, had the courage to deliver; that down to the present time I had scarcely conceived that God granted us such command over human infirmities, and had found a difficulty in crediting the examples I had read in histories; but that with such

evidence of the thing before my eyes, I gave praise to God that it had shown itself in one so excessively dear to me, and who loved me so entirely, and that his example would help me to act in a similar manner when my turn came. Interrupting me, he begged that it might happen so, and that the conversation which had passed between us might not be mere words, but might be impressed deeply on our minds, to be put in exercise at the first occasion; and that this was the real object and aim of all philosophy.

He then took my hand, and continued: "Brother, friend, there are many acts of my life, I think, which have cost me as much difficulty as this one is likely to do; and, after all, I have been long prepared for it, and have my lesson by heart. Have I not lived long enough? I am just upon thirty-three. By the grace of God, my days so far have known nothing but health and happiness; but in the ordinary course of our unstable human affairs, this could not have lasted much longer; it would have become time for me to enter on graver avocations, and I should thus have involved myself in numberless vexations, and, among them, the troubles of old age, from which I shall now be exempt. Moreover, it is probable that hitherto my life has been spent more simply, and with less of evil, than if God had spared me, and I had survived to feel the thirst for riches and worldly prosperity. I am sure, for my part, that I now go to God and the place of the blessed." He seemed to detect in my expression some inquietude at his words; and he exclaimed, "What, my brother, would you make me entertain apprehensions? Had I any, whom would it become so much as yourself to remove them?"

The notary, who had been summoned to draw up his will, came in the evening, and when he had the documents prepared, I inquired of La Boetie if he

would sign them. "Sign them," cried he; "I will do so with my own hand; but I could desire more time, for I feel exceedingly timid and weak, and in a manner exhausted." But when I was going to change the conversation, he suddenly rallied, said he had but a short time to live, and asked if the notary wrote rapidly, for he should dictate without making any pause. The notary was called, and he dictated his will there and then with such speed that the man could scarcely keep up with him; and when he had done, he asked me to read it out, saying to me, "What a good thing it is to look after what are called our riches." Sunt hæc quæ hominibus vocantur bona. *As soon as the will was signed, the chamber being full, he asked me if it would hurt him to talk. I answered, that it would not, if he did not speak too loud. He then summoned Mademoiselle de Saint Quentin, his niece, to him, and addressed her thus: "Dear niece, since my earliest acquaintance with thee, I have observed the marks of great natural goodness in thee; but the services which thou rendered to me, with so much affectionate diligence, in my present and last necessity, inspire me with high hopes of thee; and I am under great obligations to thee, and give thee most affectionate thanks. Let me relieve my conscience by counselling thee to be, in the first place, devout to God: for this doubtless is our first duty, failing which all others can be of little advantage or grace, but which, duly observed, carries with it necessarily all other virtues. After God, thou shouldest love thy father and mother—thy mother, my sister, whom I regard as one of the best and most intelligent of women, and by whom I beg of thee to let thy own life be regulated. Allow not thyself to be led away by pleasures; shun, like the plague, the foolish familiarities thou seest between some men and women;*

harmless enough at first, but which by insidious degrees corrupt the heart, and thence lead it to negligence, and then into the vile slough of vice. Credit me, the greatest safeguard to female chastity is sobriety of demeanour. I beseech and direct that thou often call to mind the friendship which was betwixt us; but I do not wish thee to mourn for me too much—an injunction which, so far as it is in my power, I lay on all my friends, since it might seem that by doing so they felt a jealousy of that blessed condition in which I am about to be placed by death. I assure thee, my dear, that if I had the option now of continuing in life or of completing the voyage on which I have set out, I should find it very hard to choose. Adieu, dear niece."

Mademoiselle d'Arsat, his step-daughter, was next called. He said to her: "Daughter, you stand in no great need of advice from me, insomuch as you have a mother, whom I have ever found most sagacious, and entirely in conformity with my own opinions and wishes, and whom I have never found faulty; with such a preceptress, you cannot fail to be properly instructed. Do not account it singular that I, with no tie of blood to you, am interested in you; for, being the child of one who is so closely allied to me, I am necessarily concerned in what concerns you; and consequently the affairs of your brother, M. d'Arsat, have ever been watched by me with as much care as my own; nor perhaps will it be to your disadvantage that you were my step-daughter. You enjoy sufficient store of wealth and beauty; you are a lady of good family; it only remains for you to add to those possessions the cultivation of your mind, in which I exhort you not to fail. I do not think it necessary to warn you against vice, a thing so odious in women, for I would not even suppose that you could harbour

any inclination for it—nay, I believe that you hold the very name in abhorrence. Dear daughter, farewell."

All in the room were weeping and lamenting; but he held without interruption the thread of his discourse, which was pretty long. But when he had done, he directed us all to leave the room, except the women attendants, whom he styled his garrison. But first, calling to him my brother, M. de Beauregard, he said to him: "M. de Beauregard, you have my best thanks for all the care you have taken of me. I have now a thing which I am very anxious indeed to mention to you, and with your permission I will do so." As my brother gave him encouragement to proceed, he added: "I assure you that I never knew any man who engaged in the reformation of our Church with greater sincerity, earnestness, and single-heartedness than yourself. I consider that you were led to it by observing the vicious character of our prelates, which no doubt much requires setting in order, and by imperfections which time has brought into our Church. It is not my desire at present to discourage you from this course, for I would have no man act in opposition to his conscience; but I wish, having regard to the good repute acquired by your family from its enduring concord—a family than which none can be dearer to me; a family, thank God! no member of which has ever been guilty of dishonour—in regard, further, to the will of your good father to whom you owe so much, and of your uncle, I wish you to avoid extreme means; avoid harshness and violence: be reconciled with your relatives; do not act apart, but unite. You perceive what disasters our quarrels have brought upon this kingdom, and I anticipate still worse mischiefs; and in your goodness and wisdom, beware of involv-

ing your family in such broils; let it continue to enjoy its former reputation and happiness. M. de Beauregard, take what I say in good part, and as a proof of the friendship I feel for you. I postponed till now any communication with you on the subject, and perhaps the condition in which you see me address you may cause my advice and opinion to carry greater authority." My brother expressed his thanks to him cordially.

On the Monday morning he had become so ill that he quite despaired of himself; and he said to me very pitifully: "Brother, do not you feel pain for all the pain I am suffering? Do you not perceive now that the help you give me has no other effect than that of lengthening my suffering?"

Shortly afterwards he fainted, and we all thought him gone; but by the application of vinegar and wine he rallied. But he soon sank, and when he heard us in lamentation, he murmured, "O God! who is it that teases me so? Why did you break the agreeable repose I was enjoying? I beg of you to leave me." And then, when he caught the sound of my voice, he continued: "And art thou, my brother, likewise unwilling to see me at peace? O how thou robbest me of my repose!" After a while, he seemed to gain more strength, and called for wine, which he relished, and declared it to be the finest drink possible. I, in order to change the current of his thoughts, put in, "Surely not; water is the best." "Ah, yes," he returned, "doubtless so; Ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ.[1] *He had now become icy-cold at his extremities, even to his face; a deathly perspiration was upon him, and his pulse was scarcely perceptible.*

This morning he confessed, but the priest had

[1] Pindar, *Olymp.* i. 1–2. The rest of the quotation is: "but gold is a blazing fire."

omitted to bring with him the necessary apparatus for celebrating Mass. On the Tuesday, however, M. de la Boetie summoned him to aid him, as he said, in discharging the last office of a Christian. After the conclusion of Mass, he took the sacrament; and when the priest was about to depart, he said to him: "Spiritual father, I implore you humbly, as well as those over whom you are set, to pray to the Almighty on my behalf; that, if it be decreed in heaven that I am now to end my life, He will take compassion on my soul, and pardon me my sins, which are manifold, it not being possible for so weak and poor a creature as I to obey completely the will of such a Master; or, if He think fit to keep me longer here, that it may please Him to release me from my present extreme anguish, and to direct my footsteps in the right path, that I may become a better man than I have been." He paused to recover breath a little, but noticing that the priest was about to go away, he called him back, and proceeded: "I desire to say, besides, in your hearing this: I declare that I was christened and I have lived, and that so I wished to die, in the faith which Moses preached in Egypt; which afterwards the Patriarchs accepted and professed in Judæa; and which, in the course of time, has been transmitted to France and to us." He seemed desirous of adding something more, but he ended with a request to his uncle and me to send up prayers for him; "for these are," he said, "the best duties that Christians can fulfil one for another." In the course of talking, his shoulder was uncovered, and although a man-servant stood near him, he asked his uncle to readjust the clothes. Then, turning his eyes towards me, he said, "Ingenui est, cui multum debeas, ei plurimum velle debere."

M. de Belot called in the afternoon to see him, and

M. de la Boetie, taking his hand, said to him: "I was on the point of discharging my debt, but my kind creditor has given me a little further time." A little while after, appearing to wake out of a sort of reverie, he uttered words which he had employed once or twice before in the course of his sickness: "Ah well, ah well, whenever the hour comes, I await it with pleasure and fortitude." And then, as they were holding his mouth open by force to give him a draught, he observed to M. de Belot: "An vivere tanti est?"

As the evening approached, he began perceptibly to sink; and while I supped, he sent for me to come, being no more than the shadow of a man, or, as he put it himself, non homo, sed species hominis; *and he said to me with the utmost difficulty: "My brother, my friend, please God I may realise the imaginations I have just enjoyed." Afterwards, having waited for some time while he remained silent, and by painful efforts was drawing long sighs (for his tongue at this point began to refuse its functions), I said, "What are they?" "Grand, grand!" he replied. "I have never yet failed," returned I, "to have the honour of hearing your conceptions and imaginations communicated to me; will you not now still let me enjoy them?" "I would indeed," he answered; "but, my brother, I am not able to do so; they are admirable, infinite, and unspeakable." He stopped short there, for he could not go on. A little before, indeed, he had shown a desire to speak to his wife, and had told her, with as gay a countenance as he could contrive to assume, that he had a story to tell her. And it seemed as if he was making an attempt to gain utterance; but, his strength failing him, he begged a little wine to resuscitate it. It was of no avail, for he fainted away suddenly, and was for some time insensible.*

Having become so near a neighbour to death, and hearing the sobs of Mademoiselle de la Boetie, he called her, and said to her thus: "My own image, you grieve yourself beforehand; will you not have pity on me? take courage. Assuredly, it costs me more than half the pain I endure to see you suffer; and reasonably so, because the evils which we ourselves feel we do not actually ourselves suffer, but it is certain sentient faculties which God plants in us that feel them: whereas what we feel on account of others, we feel by consequence of a certain reasoning process which goes on within our minds. But I am going away——" That he said because his strength was failing him; and fearing that he had frightened his wife, he resumed, observing: "I am going to sleep. Good night, my wife; go thy way." This was the last farewell he took of her.

After she had left, "My brother," said he to me, "keep near me, if you please"; and then feeling the advance of death more pressing and more acute, or else the effect of some warm draught which they had made him swallow, his voice grew stronger and clearer, and he turned quite with violence in his bed, so that all began again to entertain the hope which we had lost only upon witnessing his extreme prostration.

At this stage he proceeded, among other things, to pray me again and again, in a most affectionate manner, to give him a place; so that I was apprehensive that his reason might be impaired, particularly when, on my pointing out to him that he was doing himself harm, and that these were not the words of a rational man, he did not give way at first, but redoubled his outcry, saying, "My brother, my brother! dost thou then refuse me a place?" insomuch that he constrained me to demonstrate to him that, as he breathed and spoke, and had his physical being,

therefore he had his place. "Yes, yes," he responded, "I have; but it is not that which I need; and, besides, when all is said, I have no longer any existence." "God," I replied, "will grant you a better one soon." "Would it were now, my brother," was his answer. "It is now three days since I have been eager to take my departure."

Being in this extremity, he frequently called me, merely to satisfy him that I was at his side. At length, he composed himself a little to rest, which strengthened our hopes; so much so, indeed, that I left the room, and went to rejoice thereupon with Mademoiselle de la Boetie. But, an hour or so afterwards, he called me by name once or twice, and then with a long sigh expired at three o'clock on Wednesday morning, the 18th August 1563, having lived thirty-two years, nine months, and seventeen days." [1]

III

To the Same.[2]

In pursuance of the instructions which you gave me last year in your house at Montaigne, Monseigneur, I have put into a French dress, with my own hand, Raymonde de Sebonde, that great Spanish theologian and philosopher; and I have divested him, so far as I could, of that rough bearing and barbaric appearance which you saw him wear at first; so that, in my opinion, he is now qualified to present himself in the best company. It is perfectly possible

[1] This episode remained so vividly and powerfully imprinted in the mind of Montaigne, that, many years after, when he was in Italy, the sorrow seemed to return with all the old force, and so overcame him, that he was for a time in a state which occasioned grave alarm.

[2] This letter is prefixed to Montaigne's translation of the "Natural Theology" of Raymonde de Sebonde, printed at Paris in 1569.

that some fastidious persons will detect in the book some trace of Gascon parentage; but it will be so much the more to their discredit that they allowed the task to devolve on one who is quite a novice in these things. It is only right, Monseigneur, that the work should come before the world under your auspices, since whatever emendations and polish it may have received are owing to you. Still I see well that, if you think proper to balance accounts with the author, you will find yourself much his debtor; for against his excellent and religious discourses, his lofty and, so to speak, divine conceptions, you will find that you will have to set nothing but words and phraseology; a sort of merchandise so ordinary and commonplace, that whoever has the most of it, peradventure is the worst off.

Monseigneur, I pray God to grant you a very long and happy life. From Paris, this 18th of June 1568. *Your most humble and most obedient son,*

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

IV

To Monsieur, Monsieur DE LANSAC,[1] *Knight of the King's Order, Privy Councillor, Sub-controller of his Finance, and Captain of the Cent Gardes of his Household.*

*Monsieur,—I send you the "*Œconomics*" of Xenophon, put into French by the late M. de la Boetie,[2] a present which appears to me to be appropriate to you, as well for having originally proceeded, as you know, from a gentleman of mark,[3] a very great*

[1] This letter appears to belong to 1570.

[2] Printed at Paris, 8vo, 1571, and reissued, with the addition of some notes in 1572, with a fresh title-page.

[3] Meaning Xenophon.

man in war and peace, as for having taken its second shape from a personage whom I know to have been loved and esteemed by you during his life. This will serve you as a spur to continue to cherish towards his name and memory your good opinion and will. And to be bold with you, Monsieur, do not fear to increase these sentiments somewhat; for, having knowledge only from public testimony of what he had done, it is for me to assure you that he had so many degrees of proficiency beyond, that you were very far from knowing him completely. He did me that honour in his life, which I count the most fortunate circumstance in my own career, to knit with me a friendship so close and so intimate, that there was no movement, impulse, thought of his mind which I had not the means of considering and judging, unless my vision sometimes fell short of the truth. Without lying, then, he was, on the whole, so nearly a miracle, that in order that I may not be discredited, casting aside probability, it is needful for me to keep myself well within the limits of my knowledge. And for this time, Monsieur, I shall content myself with praying you, for the honour and respect you owe to truth, to testify and believe that our Guienne has never beheld his peer among the men of his vocation. Under the hope, therefore, that you will render him what is justly due to him, and in order to refresh him in your memory, I give you this book, which will at the same time answer for me that were it not for the special excuse which my incapacity makes for me, I would present you as willingly something of my own, as an acknowledgment of the obligations I owe to you, and of the ancient favour and friendship which you have borne toward the members of our house. But, Monsieur, in default of better coin, I offer you in payment a most assured desire to do you humble service.

Monsieur, I pray God to have you in His keeping.
Your obedient servant,

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

V

To Monsieur, Monsieur DE MESMES, *Seigneur de Roissy and Malassize, Privy Councillor to the King.*

Monsieur,—It is one of the most notable follies which men commit, to employ the strength of their understanding in overturning and destroying common received opinions, and which afford us satisfaction and content. For where everything beneath heaven employs the means and utensils, which Nature has placed in our hands (as indeed it is customary) for the advancement and commodity of its being, these, in order to appear of a more sprightly and enlightened wit, which accepts not anything that has not been tried and balanced a thousand times with the most subtle reasoning, sacrifice their peace of mind to doubt, uneasiness, and feverish excitement. It is not without reason that childhood and simplicity have been recommended by holy writ itself. For my part, I prefer to be more at my ease and less clever: more content and less wide in my range. This is the reason, Monsieur, why, although persons of an ingenious turn laugh at our care as to what will happen after our own time, as, for instance, to our souls, which, lodged elsewhere, will lose all consciousness of what goes on here below, yet I consider it to be a great consolation for the frailty and brevity of this life, to reflect that there is the power of prolonging it by reputation and renown; and I embrace very readily such a pleasant and favourable notion innate in our being,

without inquiring too curiously either the how or why. Insomuch that having loved beyond everything else M. de la Boetie, the greatest man, in my judgment, of our age, I should think myself very negligent of my duty if I failed, to the extent of my power, to prevent so rich a name as his, and a memory so deserving of remembrance, from disappearing and being lost; and if I did not essay by these means to resuscitate it and make it live again. I believe that he something feels this, and that my services affect and rejoice him. In truth, he lodges with me so vividly and so wholly that I am loth to believe him committed to the gross earth, or altogether severed from communication with us. Therefore, Monsieur, since every new knowledge which I afford of him and his name is so much added to his second being, and, moreover, since his name is ennobled and honoured by the place which receives it, it falls to me not only to extend it as widely as I can, but to confide it to the keeping of persons of honour and virtue, among whom you hold such a rank, that, to afford you the opportunity of receiving this new guest, and giving him good entertainment, I decided on presenting to you this little work, not for any service you are likely to derive from it, being well aware that to deal with Plutarch and his companions you have nought to do save as an interpreter; but it is possible that Madame de Roissy, perceiving in it the order of her household and of your happy accord represented to the life, will be very pleased to find her own natural inclination to have not only reached but surpassed the imaginations of the wisest philosophers, regarding the duties and laws of wedlock. And, at all events, it will be always an honour to me, to be able to do anything which shall be for the pleasure of you and yours, on account of the obligation under which I lie to serve you.

Monsieur, I pray God to grant you a very long and happy life. From Montaigne, this 30th April 1570. *Your humble servant,*

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

VI

To Monsieur, Monsieur DE L'HÔPITAL, *Chancellor of France.*[1]

Monseigneur,—I hold the opinion that you others, to whose hands fortune and reason have committed the government of public affairs, are not more inquisitive in any point than in arriving at a knowledge of those in office under you; for no community is so poorly furnished, that it has not persons sufficient for the discharge of all official duties, provided that there is a just distribution of functions. And that point gained, there should be nothing wanting to make a State perfect in its constitution. Now, in proportion as this is more to be desired, so it is the more difficult, since your eyes can neither stretch so far as to select from a multitude so large and so widely spread, nor to penetrate hearts, to discover intentions and conscience, matter principally to be considered; so that there has never been any commonwealth so well established, in which we may not detect often enough a deficiency in this distributory selection. And in those, where ignorance and malice, favouritism, intrigue, and violence govern, if any choice is seen to be made on the ground of merit and regularity, we owe it without doubt to chance, which, in its inconstant movements, has for once found the path of reason.

[1] This letter is annexed to the portion of the volume already noticed which contains the poems, and which was printed later than the rest.

Monsieur, this consideration has often consoled me, knowing M. Etienne de la Boetie, one of the fittest and most necessary men for high office in France, to have passed his whole life in obscurity, by his domestic hearth, to the great detriment of our common weal; for, so far as he was concerned, I tell you, Monseigneur, that he was so abundantly endowed with those treasures which defy fortune, that never was man more satisfied or content. I know well that he was raised to the local dignities, which are accounted considerable; and I know also, that no one ever brought to their discharge a better capacity; and that when he died at the age of thirty-two, he had acquired a reputation in that way beyond all who had preceded him.

But all that is no reason that a man should be left a common soldier who deserves to become a captain; nor that mean functions should be assigned to those who are perfectly equal to the highest. In truth, his powers were badly economised and too sparingly employed; insomuch that, over and above his work, there was abundant capacity lying idle, from which the public service might have drawn profit and himself glory.

Therefore, Monsieur, since he was so apathetic in pushing forward to the front (as virtue and ambition unfortunately seldom lodge together), and since he lived in an age so dull and so jealous, that he could be little succoured by witnesses to his character, I have it marvellously at heart that his memory, at all events, to which I owe the good offices of a friend, should enjoy the recompense of his brave life, and that it should survive in the good report of persons of honour and virtue. On this account, I have been desirous to publish and present to you, Monsieur, such few Latin verses as he left behind. Different from

the mason, who places the most attractive portion of his house toward the street, and from the shop-keeper, who displays in his window the richest sample of his merchandise, that which was most recommendable in him, the juice and marrow of his genius, departed with him, and there have remained to us but the bark and the leaves.

Whoever could make visible the exactly regulated movements of his mind, his piety, his virtue, his justice, the vivacity of his spirit, the solidity and the sanity of his judgment, the loftiness of his conceptions, raised so far above the common level, his learning, the grace which accompanied his ordinary actions, the tender affection which he bore for his miserable country, and his capital and sworn detestation of all vice, but principally of that villanous traffic which disguises itself under the honourable title of Justice, would certainly impress all well-disposed persons with a singular affection toward him and a marvellous regret for his loss. But, Monsieur, I am the more unable to do justice to him, since of the fruit of his own studies he had never thought of leaving any proof to posterity; and there has remained to us only what he occasionally wrote by way of pastime.

However this may be, I beg you, Monsieur, to receive it with a good countenance, and as our judgment argues many times from lesser things to greater ones, and as even the recreations of illustrious men carry with them to the clear-sighted some honourable traits of their origin, I would have you ascend hence to some knowledge of himself, and love and cherish his name and his memory. In this, Monsieur, you will only reciprocate the high opinion which he had of your virtue, and realise what he infinitely desired in his lifetime; for there was no one in the world in whose acquaintance and friendship he would have

so willingly seen himself established as in your own. But if any man is offended by the freedom which I use with the belongings of another, I apprise him that nothing was ever more precisely spoken in the schools of the philosophers respecting the law and duties of sacred friendship, than what this personage and myself have practised together.

For the rest, Monsieur, this slender gift, to strike two blows with one stone, may likewise serve, if you please, to testify the honour and reverence which I entertain for your ability and singular qualities; for as to those gifts which are foreign and accidental, it is not to my taste to take them into account.

Monsieur, I pray God to grant you a very happy and long life. From Montaigne, this 30th of April 1570.—*Your humble and obedient servant,*

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

VII

To Monsieur, Monsieur DE FOIX, *Privy Councillor, and Ambassador of His Majesty to the Signory of Venice.*[1]

Monsieur,—Being on the point of commending to you and to posterity the memory of the late Etienne de la Boetie, as well for his extreme virtue as for the singular affection which he bore to me, it struck my fancy as an indiscretion very serious in its results, and meriting some coercion from our laws, the practice which often prevails of robbing virtue of glory, its faithful associate, in order to confer it, in accordance with our private interests and without discrimination, on the first comer. Seeing that our

[1] Printed before the *Vers François* of Etienne de la Boetie, 8vo, Paris, 1572.

two principal guiding reins are reward and punishment, which only touch us nearly, and as men, through the medium of honour and dishonour, forasmuch as these go straight to the soul, and come home to our innermost feelings and those most truly ours: just where mere animals are not at all susceptible to other kinds of recompense and corporal chastisement. Moreover, it is well to notice that the custom of praising virtue, even in those who are no longer with us, is impalpable to them, while it serves as a stimulant to the living to imitate them; just as capital sentences are carried out by the law, more for the sake of example to others, than in the interest of those who suffer. Now, commendation and its opposite being analogous as regards effects, it is hard to deny that our laws prohibit us from slandering the reputation of others, and nevertheless do prevent us from bestowing nobility without merit. This pernicious licence in distributing praise broadcast was formerly checked in another direction; indeed, peradventure, it contributed to involve poesy in discredit among the wiser sort. However this may be, it cannot be concealed that the vice of falsehood is one very unbecoming in a man well-born, let them give it what guise they will.

As for that personage of whom I am speaking to you, Monsieur, he sends me far away indeed from this kind of language; for the danger is not, lest I should lend him anything, but that I might take something from him; and it is his ill-fortune that, while he has supplied me, so far as a man could, with most just and most obvious opportunities for commendation I find myself unable and unqualified to render it to him—I say, do I, to whom alone he communicated to the life, and who alone can answer for a million of graces, perfections, and virtues, latent (thanks to the ingratitude of his fortune) in so noble a soul.

For the nature of things having (I know not how) permitted that truth, fair and acceptable as it may be of itself, is only embraced where there are arts of persuasion to insinuate it into our minds, I see myself so wanting, both in authority to support my simple testimony, and in the eloquence requisite for lending it value and weight, that I was on the eve of relinquishing the task, having nothing of his which would enable me to exhibit to the world a proof of his genius and knowledge.

In truth, Monsieur, having been overtaken by his fate in the flower of his age, and in the full enjoyment of the most vigorous health, he had meditated nothing less than to publish works which would have demonstrated to posterity what sort of a man he was. And peradventure he was indifferent enough to fame, having thought of the matter, to have no curiosity to proceed farther in it. But I have come to the conclusion, that it was far more excusable in him to bury with him all his rare endowments, than it would be on my part to bury also with me the knowledge of them which he had imparted to me. And, anyhow, having collected with care all that I found in a complete state here and there among his memorandum-books and papers, I have thought good to distribute them so as to recommend his memory to as many persons as possible, selecting the most suitable and worthy of my acquaintance, and those whose testimony might do him greatest honour. Such as you, Monsieur, who very possibly have yourself had some knowledge of him during his life, but assuredly too slight to discover the extent of his entire worth. Posterity will credit it, if it chooses; but I swear upon all that I own of conscience, that I knew and saw him to be such as, all things considered, I could neither desire nor imagine a genius surpassing his; and as he cannot have many associates, I beg you

very humbly, Monsieur, not only to undertake the general protection of his name, but also these ten or twelve French verses, which cast themselves, as of necessity, under the shadow of your patronage. For I will not disguise from you that their publication was deferred, upon the appearance of his other writings, under the pretext that they were too crude to come to light. You will see, Monsieur, how much truth there is in this; and since it seems that this verdict touches the interest of all this part, whence it is thought that hereabout nothing can be produced in our own dialect but what is barbarous and unpolished. It falls to you, who, besides your rank as the first house in Guienne, handed down from your ancestors, possess every other sort of qualification, to establish, not merely by your example, but by your authoritative testimony, that such is not always the case: the more so that, though 'tis more natural with the Gascons to act than talk, yet sometimes they employ the tongue more than the arm, and wit in place of valour.

For my own part, Monsieur, it is not my game to judge of such matters; but I have heard persons who are supposed to understand them, say that these stanzas are not only worthy to be offered in the market, but, independently of that, as regards beauty and wealth of invention, they are as full of marrow and matter as any compositions of the kind which have appeared in our language. Naturally each workman feels himself more strong in some special part of his art, and those are to be regarded as most fortunate who lay hands on the noblest, for all the parts essential to the construction of any whole are not equally prizable. Delicacy of phrase, softness and harmony of language, are found perchance in others; but in imaginative grace, and in the store of pointed wit, I do not think he has been surpassed;

and we should take into the account that he made these things neither his occupation nor his study, and that he scarcely took a pen in his hand more than once a year, witness the little that we have of his whole life. For you see here, Monsieur, green wood and dry, without any sort of selection, all that has come into my possession; insomuch that there are among the rest efforts even of his boyhood. In point of fact, he seems to have written them merely to shew that he was capable of dealing with all subjects: for otherwise, thousands of times, in the course of ordinary conversation, we have seen things proceed from him infinitely more worthy of being known, infinitely more worthy of being admired.

Behold, Monsieur, what justice and affection, forming a rare conjunction, oblige me to say of this great and good man; and if I have offended by the familiarity in detaining you at such a length, you will recollect, if you please, that the principal result of greatness and eminence is to lay one open to importunate appeals on behalf of the rest of the world. Hereupon, after having presented to you my very humble devotion to your service, I beseech God to give you, Monsieur, a very happy and prolonged life. From Montaigne, this 1st of September 1570.—Your obedient servant, MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

VIII

To Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle DE MONTAIGNE, *my wife.*[1]

My wife,—You understand well that it is not the part of a man of the world, according to the rules of

[1] Printed as a preface to the "Consolation of Plutarch to his Wife," published by Montaigne, with several other tracts by La Boetie,

this time, still to court and caress you; for they say that a sensible man may well take a wife, but that to espouse her is to act like a fool. Let them talk; I adhere for my part to the custom of the elder age; I also wear my hair in that fashion. And, in truth, novelty costs this poor State to this moment so dear (and I do not know whether we are yet at the height), that everywhere and in everything I forsake the mode. Let us live, my wife, you and I, in the old French method. Now, you may recollect how the late M. de la Boetie, that dear brother and inseparable companion of mine, gave me, at his death, all his papers and books, which have remained ever since the most favourite part of my effects. I do not wish to keep them niggardly to myself alone, nor do I deserve to have the exclusive use of them. On this account I have formed a desire to communicate them to my friends; and because I have none, I believe, more intimate than you, I send you the Consolatory Letter of Plutarch to his Wife, translated by him into French; very sorry that fortune has made you so suitable a present, and that, having had no child save a daughter, long looked for, after four years of our married life, it was our lot to lose her in the second year of her age. But I leave to Plutarch the charge of comforting you, and acquainting you with your duty herein, praying you to trust him for my sake; for he will reveal to you my purposes, and will state

about 1571. It is to be noted that Montaigne addresses his wife as Mademoiselle, and he follows the same course with a second married lady in Letter xxxii. *post.* Mademoiselle de Montaigne does not occupy any prominent position in the biography of her husband, nor does the only daughter and representative, Eleonore. The regard of Montaigne seems to have been concentrated on his father. Yet the widow and daughter shewed a decent consideration for his memory, and facilitated the editorial labours of Mlle. de Gournay, and it may be added, that when he was absent from his chateau at Paris or elsewhere, Montaigne expressly states in one of the essays, that he left the entire management of domestic affairs to his wife.

them far better than I should myself. Hereupon, my wife, I commend myself very heartily to your good-will, and pray God that He will have you in His keeping. From Paris, this 10*th September* 1570.— *Your good husband,*

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE.

IX

To Madame DE GRAMMONT, *Comtesse de Guissen.*

(*With twenty-nine sonnets of Monsieur De la Boetie.*[1])

Madam,—I offer to your ladyship nothing of mine, either because it is already yours, or because I find nothing in my writings worthy of you: but I have a great desire that these verses, into what part of the world soever they may travel, may carry your name in the front, for the honour will accrue to them, by having the great Corisande d'Andoins for their safe-conduct. I conceive this present, madam, so much the more proper for you, both by reason there are few ladies in France who are so good judges of poetry, and make so good use of it as you do; as also, that there is none who can give it the spirit and life that you can, by that rich and incomparable voice nature has added to your other perfections. You will find, madam, that these verses deserve your esteem, and will agree with me in this, that Gascony never yielded more invention, finer expression, or that more

[1] "These nine-and-twenty sonnets were printed in Abel Angelier's quarto edition, Paris, 1588. They scarce contain anything in them but amorous complaints, expressed in a very rough style, discovering the follies and outrages of a restless passion, overgorged, as it were, with jealousies, fears, and suspicions."—Coste. Comp. vol. ii. p. 217, where another epistle to this lady forms part of an Essay, and could not well be displaced.

evidence themselves to flow from a master-hand. And be not jealous, that you have but the remainder of what I published some years since, under the patronage of Monsieur de Foix, your worthy kinsman; for, certainly, these have something in them more sprightly and luxuriant, as being written in a greener youth, and enflamed with a noble ardour that one of these days I will tell you, madam, in your ear. The others were written later, when he was a suitor for marriage, and in honour of his wife, and already relishing of I know not what matrimonial coldness. And for my part, I am of the same opinion with those who hold that poesy appears nowhere so gay as in a wanton and irregular subject.

[MONTAIGNE.]

[1580.]

X

To the JURATS OF BORDEAUX.[1]

Messieurs,—I trust that the journey of Monsieur de Cursol will bring some advantage to the town, having in hand a case so just and so favourable; you did all in your power to put the business which was before you in good order. Matters being in so good a train, I beg you to excuse my absence for some time, inasmuch as I shall hasten to you so far as the pressure of my affairs will permit. I hope that this [the delay] will be slight; however, you will keep me, if you please, in your good grace, and will command me, if the occasion shall arise of employing me for

[1] Published from the original among the archives of the town of Bordeaux, by M. Gustave Brunet, in the *Bulletin du Bibliophile*, July 1839.

the public service. And your Monsieur de Cursol has also written to me and apprised me of his journey. I humbly commend myself to you, and pray God, Messieurs, to grant you long and happy life. From Montaigne, this 25th of May 1582. *Your humble brother and servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

XI

To Monseigneur, Monseigneur DE NANTOUILLET, *Councillor to the King.*

Monseigneur,—You desire to know from me how the King should hold the three reins by which absolute power is regulated. This is my view. And in the first place, touching the three reins, of which I have already spoken to you in my preceding missive, whereby the absolute power of the prince and monarch, which is called tyrannical when it is used contrary to reason, is curbed and reduced to moderation, and so is reputed just, tolerable, and aristocratic. I say once again that the King can do nothing more agreeable, more pleasant, and more profitable to his subjects, nor more honourable and more praiseworthy to himself, than to observe the three things by virtue of which he acquires the name of good and most Christian King, father of the people, and well-beloved, and all other titles which a brave and glorious prince can obtain. This is my mind and advice. Therefore I pray God, Monseigneur, to give you in good health good and long life. The 22nd of November 1582. *Your servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

XII

To Henry III.[1]

Sire,—By information which I have had in this place of Moncornet,[2] it seems that fortune is suffering to release you from the promise which your goodness and liberality made me a few days since. For I found in the hands of M. Pinard[3] a letter herewith enclosed, whereby it is notified that the Priory of Provins is vacant by the death of Monseigneur Maurice de Commerces,[4] and may be worth from a thousand to twelve hundred livres, as the writer says. It is in the Loudonnois, and in the nomination of your Majesty, who will not make a Prior of me, if you give it me, so much as the place will be to me a dukedom or countship, which will be perpetually stocked with big and good capons, whenever you chose to have them; as well as quails. I do not offer here to interfere with the resolution which your Majesty has formed for the distribution of your bounty, for he who has waited five-and-twenty years on his superiors[5] can wait two months more, or even a year, for folks of smaller account; and that my letter may not be longer than myself, and may not be importunate to you, I

[1] Now first printed in English from a copy of the French original inserted by Mr. W. Roberts in the *Bookworm* for February 1894. The original is in the Bibliothèque. It apparently contained more than one enclosure, for the petition for the repeal of customs duties at Bordeaux is merely referred to.

[2] There were three Moncornets. It does not appear which this was.

[3] Claude Pinard, Baron de Cremailles, and secretary to the Maréchal Saint-André, a favourite of Catherine de' Medici, and Secretary of State in 1570. He was also on the best terms with Henry III., who employed him as a diplomatist. He died September 14, 1605.—W. Roberts.

[4] His name was Maurice de Commartin.

[5] Original reads *maîtresses* according to Mr. Roberts; more probably *maistres*.

will conclude by praying your Majesty to disregard that hardihood and presumption in writing to you on the exigency [1] *which threatens as well those of low as of high estate. I supplicate God with all my heart that He will be pleased to advance your welfare* [2] *much and more while you are King of France. From Moncornet, the 7th of July* 1583. *Your very humble servant and subject,* MONTAIGNE.

XIII

Memorial of MONTAIGNE, *Mayor of Bordeaux, and of his Jurats, addressed to the King of Navarre, on different subjects interesting that same town.*[3]

10 December 1583

It is so that MM. de Montaigne, mayor, and De Lurbe, syndic procureur of the town of Bordeaux, are charged and commissioned to make a representation to the King of Navarre, Lieutenant-General of the King in the country and duchy of Guienne, for the service of his Majesty and relief of his subjects.

They will represent to the said Lord King of Navarre that the provinces and towns cannot be maintained and preserved in their present state without freedom of trade, which by the unimpeded intercourse of one with the other produces abundance of all things, and by that means the husband by the sale of his produce feeds and supports his family, the

[1] The customs charges.

[2] "Qu'il luy plaise prosperer Vre Majeste."

[3] The present document, though not, of course, epistolary, is worth insertion as an example of the strictly official style of the Essayist, if we are correct in assuming that the body of the production was from his pen. A very remarkable pamphlet, published only in 1584, but relating to 1582–83, is noticed elsewhere as probably from the mayor's pen. The address, which it contains, was actually delivered, however, according to M. Bonnefon, by Antoine Loysel.

shopkeeper trafficks in goods, and the citizen finds price for his labour—the whole in aid of the public expenditure; and inasmuch as the chief commerce of this town is carried on with the inhabitants of Toulouse and other places situated on the Garonne, as well for the matter of grain, wines, pastels, fish, as for woollen goods, and that the said Mayor and Jurats have been informed by a common report that those of Mas de Verdun are resolved, under pretext of failure of the payment of the garrison of the cautionary towns, named by the edict of pacification, to stop the boats laden with merchandise both ascending and descending the said river Garonne, which will tend to the total ruin of this country, the said Lord King of Navarre shall be supplicated not to permit the arrest of the said boats and goods either at the said Mas de Verdun or other towns under his government, so as to keep and maintain freedom of commerce among all, according to the edicts of the King.

Done at Bordeaux in the Jurat Hall the 10th *of December* 1583. MONTAIGNE.

DALESME. GALOPIN.
PIERRE REYNIER. FANEAU.
FETAYERS. DELURBE.

XIV

To the Maréchal DE MATIGNON.

Monseigneur,—Those in this quarter who went away to join the King of Navarre have returned two days since. I have not seen them; but they report nothing but the inclination to peace, pursuant to what I wrote to you, and have no other news save a

general assembly of ministers, which meets on Monday at Saint Foy. If a great and extraordinary company of different sorts of people and of both sexes come here to-morrow, as I expect, I will communicate to you what I hear, and very humbly kiss your hands, supplicating God, Monseigneur, to give you long and happy life. From Montaigne, this 21st of January 1584. *Your humble servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

XV

To the Same.

Monseigneur,—I see nothing here meriting your attention; nevertheless, considering the favour which you do me, and the confidential access which you grant me, I venture to send this to apprise you of my health, which has been improved by change of air. I returned here after a transaction sufficiently prolonged. I found near here that some people of standing of the reformation of Sainte-Foy had killed a poor tailor with fifty or sixty strokes with scissors for no other reason than to take from him twenty sous and a cloak worth twice that sum.

I very humbly kiss your hands, and supplicate God to give you, Monseigneur, very happy and long life. From Montaigne, this 19th of April 1584. *Your very humble servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

XVI

To Monsieur, Monsieur DUPUY,[1] *the King's Councillor in his Court and Parliament of Paris, at Xaintes.*

Monsieur,—The action of the Sieur de Verres, a prisoner, who is very well known to me, deserves that you should bring to bear in his judgment your natural clemency, if, in the public interest, you are able to do so. He has done a thing not only excusable, according to the military laws of this age, but necessary and (as we are living) commendable. He committed the act, without doubt, unwillingly and under pressure; the rest of his course of life is irreproachable. I beseech you, Monsieur, to devote your attention to this; you will find the nature of this fact as I represent it to you. He is persecuted on this crime in a way which is far worse than the offence itself. If it is likely to be of use to you, I desire to inform you that he is a man brought up in my house, related to several respectable families, and above all, who has always led an honourable life, [and that he] is my particular friend. By saving him you lay me under an extreme obligation. I beg you very humbly to regard him as recommended by me, and, after kissing your hands, I pray God, Monsieur, to give you a long and happy life. From Castera,[2] this 23rd of April [1584 ?]. *Your affectionate servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

[1] This is probably the Claude Dupuy, born at Paris in 1545, and one of the fourteen judges sent into Guienne after the treaty of Fleix in 1580. It was perhaps under these circumstances that Montaigne addressed to him the present letter. He was an omnivorous book-collector.

[2] Probably Castera-Lectourois.

XVII

To MM. THE JURATS OF THE TOWN OF BORDEAUX.

Messieurs,—I received your letter, and will come to see you as soon as possible. All that court of Sainte-Foy is on my hands,[1] *and have arranged to come and see me. That done, I shall be [more] at liberty. I send you the letter of M. de Vallées, from which you will be able to judge that my presence would only involve embarrassment and uncertainty as to my choice and opinion in that matter.*

Hereupon I recommend myself humbly to your good [grace], and supplicate God to give you, Messieurs, long and happy life. From Montaigne, this 10*th of December* 1584. *Your humble brother and servant,* MONTAIGNE.

XVIII

To the Maréchal DE MATIGNON.

Monseigneur,—By reason of several communications which M. de Bissonze [Viçoze] has made to me on the part of M. de la Turenne, of the opinion which he has of you, and of the confidence which that prince has in my views; moreover, since I place scarcely any confidence in Court gossip, I formed the plan after dinner of writing to M. De Turenne; that I bad him farewell by letter; that I had received the letter of the King of Navarre, who seemed to me to take good counsel in relying on your affectionate offer of service; that I had written to Mme. de Guissen[2] *to*

[1] *Sur mes bras.*—Orig. Fr.
[2] Comtesse de Grammont, *La Belle Corisande.*

make use of the opportunity for employing her vessel, to what purpose I should engage myself toward you, and that I had advised her not to commit to her passions the interest and fortune of that prince, and since she had full power over him, to study his advantage rather than his private amours; that you spoke of going to Bayonne, whither perhaps I might offer to follow you, if I judged that my assistance would be of the slightest value; that if you went thither, the King of Navarre, knowing you to be so near, would do well to invite you to see his fine garden at Pau. This is the substance of my letter without farther detail. I send you the answer to it, which has been brought to me this evening, and, if I am not mistaken, there will soon rise trouble, and it seems to me that this letter already breathes an air of discontent and apprehension. Whatever he says, I keep them where they go for more than two months, and then we shall see a different sort of tone. I beg you to return me this with the other two; the bearer has only to study the despatch of your business.

From Montaigne, the 18th of January 1585.

MONTAIGNE.

XIX

To the Same.

Monseigneur,—I have heard nothing since, beyond that I have seen many folks of that retinue hereabout. I judge that all is evacuated, unless M. du Ferrier remains to receive the guarantees. If you like to see a letter which the Sieur du Plessis wrote me since, you will find in it that the reconciliation was perfectly complete and full of good understanding; and I believe that the master will have communicated

to him more fully than to others, knowing that he is of that way of thinking, as is likewise M. de Clervan, who saw you since. If I am to accompany you to Bayonne, I desire you to adhere to your determination to stay in Lent, in order that I may take the waters at the same time. Meanwhile, I have learned that nothing is so distasteful to the husband than to see that one is on good terms with the wife. I have had news that the Jurats have come to their good behaviour and very humbly kiss your hands, supplicating God to give you, Monseigneur, long and happy life. From Montaigne, the 26th of January 1585. *Your very humble servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

[*Postscriptum.*]—*Monseigneur, you do me a great favour in receiving amicably the affection which I shew to your service, and you may be sure that you have not gained in Guyenne any one more purely and sincerely yours. But it is little gain. When you quit a position, it ought not to be, when they can boast of having deprived you of it.*

XX

To the Same.

Monseigneur,—The man by whom I wrote last, and sent a letter of M. du Plessis, has not yet returned. Since, they report to me from Fleix, that MM. du Ferrier and la Marselière are still at S. Foi, and that the King of Navarre has just sent to demand some residue of equipments and hunting gear that he had here, and [to say] that his stay in Bearn will be longer than he thought. According to some fresh instructions of M. de Roquelaure, and favourable ones, he will go toward Bayonne and Daqs [Dax] to shew

them that the King took in very good part the entry which was made there. That is what I am told. The rest of the country remains in quiet, and nothing is stirring. Whereupon I very humbly kiss your hands, and supplicate God to give you, Monseigneur, long and happy life. From Montaigne, this 2nd of February 1585. *Your very humble servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

XXI

To the JURATS OF BORDEAUX.

Messieurs,—I have largely shared the satisfaction which you assure me that you feel with the good progress which has been made by Messieurs your Deputies, and treat it as a good augury that you have made a fortunate commencement of this year, hoping to join you at the earliest convenience. I recommend myself very humbly to your good grace, and pray God to give you, Messieurs, happy and long life. From Montaigne, this 8th February 1585. *Your humble brother and servant,* MONTAIGNE.

XXII

To the Maréchal DE MATIGNON.

Monseigneur,—I hope that the stone which troubled you when last you wrote has passed, as has another which I evacuated at the same time.

If the Jurats arrived on the day on which they were expected at Bordeaux, and came to the place of attendance, they will have been able to bring fresh news from the Court. They are circulating here a rumour

that Ferrand has been taken, at three leagues from Nérac, on his way to the Court, and brought back to Pau; also, that the Huguenots nearly surprised Taillebourg and Tallemont at the same time, and some other plans for Dax and Bayonne. On Tuesday, a troop of bohemians, which has been prowling hereabout a long time, having purchased the favour and aid of a gentleman of the country named Le Borgue la Siguinie to assist them in getting redress from another troop beyond the water in the territory of Gensac, which belongs to the King of Navarre: the said La Siguinie having assembled twenty or thirty of his friends, under pretence of going duck-shooting with arquebuses, with two or three of the said bohemians on this side the river,[1] *charged those on the other side, and killed one of them. The authorities of Gensac, advised hereof, raised an armed force, and attacked the assailants, and took four, one gentleman and three others, killed one, and wounded three or four others. The rest retired to this side, and of those of Gensac there are two or three mortally wounded. The skirmish lasted a long time, and was very hot. The matter is open to settlement, as both sides are to blame. If the Sieur de la Rocque, who is very much one of my friends, must fight with Cabanac du Puch, I wish and advise him to do so at a distance from you. Whereupon I very humbly kiss your hands, and supplicate God to grant you, Monseigneur, long and happy life. From Montaigne, this 9th of February* 1585. *Your very humble servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

[*Postscriptum.*] — *Monseigneur, my letter was closed when I received yours of the 6th and that of M. Villeroy, which you have been pleased to send me*

[1] The Garonne.

(by a man whom the Corps of the town has sent), of the fortunate expedition of their deputies. Le Sieur de la Motte sends to me to say that he has things to tell me which he cannot write, and I send word to him that, if need be, he shall come in search of me here, to which I have no reply. But as to the command which you are so good as to give, that I shall come to you, I very humbly beg you to believe that there is nothing which I face more willingly, and that I will never throw myself back into solitude, or withdraw so much from public affairs, but that there remains a singular devotion to your service and an affection of being where you are. At this moment, I am booted to go to Fleix, where the good President Ferrier and Le Sieur de la Marselière are to be to-morrow, with the intention of coming here the day after to-morrow or Tuesday. I hope to go and kiss your hands one day next week, or to let you know if there is a reasonable ground for preventing me. I have received no news from Bearne; but Poiferré, who has been at Bordeaux, wrote to me, and according to what I am told, gave the letter to a man, from whom I have not yet received it. I am vexed about it.

XXIII

To the Same.

Monseigneur,—I have just arrived from Fleix. La Marselière was there, and others of that committee. They say that, since the accident to Ferrand, and for that reason, Frontinac has come to Nérac, to whom the Queen of Navarre says that, if she had thought the King her husband so curious, she would have passed through his hands all the despatches, and what was in

the letter which she wrote to the Queen her mother, where she speaks of returning to France: that it is in the way of asking advice and considering, but not as a course on which she has resolved, and that she puts it in question on account of the slight store they so evidently set by her, that every one sees it and knows it well enough. And Frontinac says that what the King of Navarre has done was due to his fear imbibed from them, that Ferrand carried papers which affected his State and public affairs. They say that the chief effect is that several letters of the young ladies of that Court to their friends in France—I say the letters which were saved, for they say that, when Ferrand was taken, he found means to throw certain documents into the fire, which were consumed, before they could be rescued—these letters which survive afford matter for laughter. I saw, in repassing, M. Ferrier ill at Sainte-Foy, who made up his mind to come and see me one day this week. Others will be there this evening. I doubt whether he will come, and it seems to me, considering his age, that I left him in a bad state. Nevertheless I shall wait for him, unless you command me to the contrary, [and] shall on that account defer my journey to you till the commencement of next week.

Kissing your hands very humbly hereupon, and praying God, Monseigneur, to give you long and happy life. From Montaigne, this 12th of February 1585. *—Your very humble servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

[*Postscriptum.*]*—The said Ferrand had a thousand écus on him, they say; for all this information is hardly sure.*

XXIV

To the Same.

Monseigneur,—M. du Ferrier has just written to me, that the King of Navarre is to arrive at Montauban. They are hereabouts in fear of some troopers, who, they say, are quartered on the other side of the river near Bazadois. If I know the news before this is closed up, I will apprise you, and will go there to-night. It may be the forces of the King of Navarre which are mustering to make a demonstration, of which I have hereabout men at arms who are on their way to join the movement. You will see what rumours are afloat in these quarters from what the Marquis de Trans wrote to me. I saw the letter of Poiferré; there was nothing in it, except that he had to speak to me about the ladies, a thing which it was necessary that I should know, but which he could not write, nor delay his departure.

Whereupon, hoping soon to have the opportunity of kissing your hands, I supplicate God to give you, Monseigneur, long and happy life. From Montaigne, this 13th of February 1585. —Your very humble servant, MONTAIGNE.

XXV

To the Same.

Monseigneur,—I have just this Sunday morning received your two letters, whereupon I should forthwith mount horse, if it were not that the President Eimar, who left here yesterday, carries mine, which I keep till this evening, with the hope of setting out to-

morrow in search of you, and being prevented at this moment by the floods, which have overflowed the road between this and Bordeaux a day's journey. I shall sleep at Fraubenet near the port of Tourne to meet you if you leave, however, and shall arrive on Tuesday morning at Podensac, to hear what you shall be pleased to command me. If by the present bearer you do not change the appointment, I shall go in quest of you on Tuesday at Bordeaux, crossing the water only at Bastide. The news which I have received of the 11*th from Pau, that the King of Navarre was going a few days after to Boucau de Bayonne, thence to Nérac, from Nérac to Bragerac, and afterward into Saintonge. Madame de Grammont was still very ill. Whereupon I very humbly kiss your hands, and supplicate God to give you, Monseigneur, very happy and long life.*

[*? Montaigne, second half of February* 1585].—*Your very humble servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

XXVI

To the Same.

Monseigneur,—I received this morning your letter, which I have communicated to M. de Gourgues, and we have dined together at the house of M. [*the mayor*] *of Bordeaux. As to the inconvenience of transporting the money named in your memorandum, you see how difficult a thing it is to provide for; but you may be sure that we shall keep as close a watch over it as possible. I used every exertion to discover the man of whom you spoke. He has not been here; and M. de Bordeaux has shewn me a letter in which he*

mentions that he could not come to see the said Sieur of Bordeaux, as he intended, having been informed that you mistrust him. The letter is of the day before yesterday. If I could have found him, I might perhaps have pursued the gentler course, being uncertain of your resolution; but I entreat you nevertheless to feel no manner of fear that I refuse to carry out anything to which you have made up your mind, and that, where your commands are concerned, I know no distinction of business or person. I hope that you have in Guienne many as well affected to you as I am. They report that the Nantes galleys are advancing toward Brouage. M. le Maréchal de Biron has not yet left. Those who were charged to convey the message to M. d'Usa say that they cannot find him; and I believe that he is no longer here, if he has been. We keep a vigilant eye on our posts and guard, and we look after them a little more attentively in your absence, which makes me apprehensive, not merely on account of the preservation of the town, but likewise for our own sakes, knowing that the enemies of the service of the king feel how necessary you are to it, and how ill all would go without you. I am afraid that, in the part where you are, you will be overtaken by so many affairs requiring your attention on every side, that it will take you a long time and involve great difficulty before you have disposed of everything. If there supervenes any new and important occasion, I will despatch an express at once, and you may estimate that nothing is stirring if you do not hear from me: begging you also to consider that such sort of movements are wont to be so sudden and unexpected that, if they occur, they will grasp me by the throat before they say a word. I will do what I can to collect news, and for this purpose I will make a point of visiting and seeing all sorts of men. Down to the present

time nothing is stirring. M. du Londel saw me this morning, and we have been arranging for some advances for the place, where I shall go to-morrow morning. Since I began this letter, I have learnt from Chartreux that two gentlemen, who describe themselves as in the service of M. de Guise, and who come from Agen, have passed near that town (Chartreux); but I was not able to ascertain which road they have taken. They are expecting you at Agen. The Sieur de Mauvezin came as far as Canteloup, and thence returned, having got some intelligence. I am in search of one Captain Roux, to whom Masparante wrote, trying to draw him into his cause by all sorts of promises. The news of the two Nantes galleys ready to descend on Brouage with two companies of foot is certain. M. de Mercure is in the town of Nantes. The Sieur de la Courbe said to M. le President Nesmond that M. d'Elbeuf is on this side of Angers, and lodges with his father, drawing toward Lower Poitou with 4000 *foot and* 400 *or* 500 *horse, having been reinforced by the troops of M. de Brissac and others; and M. de Mercure is to join him. The report runs also that M. du Maine is about to take command of all the forces they have collected in Auvergne, and that by the district of Forez he will advance on Rouergue and us, that is to say, on the King of Navarre, against whom all this is being directed. M. de Lansac is at Bourg, and has two war-vessels which remain in attendance on him. His functions are naval. I tell you what I learn, and mix up together the hearsay of the town, which I do not find probable, with actual matter of fact, that you may be in possession of everything—begging you most humbly to return directly affairs may allow you to do so, and assuring you that meanwhile we shall not spare our labour, or, if that were necessary, our*

life, to maintain everything in the king's authority. Monseigneur, I kiss your hands very respectfully, and pray God to have you in His keeping. From Bordeaux, this Wednesday night, 22nd May 1585. *Your very humble servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

I have seen no one from the King of Navarre; they say that M. de Biron has seen him.

XXVII

To the Same.

Monseigneur,—I have written to you these passed days very fully. I send you two letters which I received for you by a servant of M. de Rouillac. The neighbourhood of M. de Vaillac fills me with alarms, and there is not a day that I have not fifty very pressing grounds for such. We most humbly beg you to come here as soon as your affairs will permit you. I have passed every night either in the tower under arms or outside on the port; and, previously to your advices, I had already been on the watch there upon the intelligence of a boat freighted with armed men, which was to pass. We have seen nothing of it; and the evening before yesterday we were there till after midnight, where M. de Gourgues was; but nothing came. I made use of Le Capitaine Saintes having need of our soldiers. Massip and he manned the three customs' boats. As for the town-guard, I hope you will find it in the state in which you left it. I send this morning two Jurats to apprise the Court of Parliament of the so many reports which are current, and of the evidently suspicious men, whom we know to be here.

Whereupon, hoping that you may be here to-morrow at latest, I very humbly kiss your hands. From Bordeaux, the 27th May 1585. MONTAIGNE.

[*Postscriptum.*]—*There is not a day that I have not been at the Château Trompette. You will find the platform*[1] *completed. I see the Archbishop daily.*

XXVIII

To the JURATS OF BORDEAUX.

Messieurs,—I have found here news of you transmitted through M. le Maréchal.[2] *I will not spare either my life or anything else for your service, and will leave it to you to judge whether what I may do for you at the forthcoming election is worth the risk of going into the town, seeing the bad state it is in,*[3] *particularly for people coming away from so fine an air as I do. I will draw as near to you on Wednesday as I can, that is, to Feuillas,*[4] *if the malady has not reached that place, where, as I wrote to M. de la Motte, I shall be very pleased to have the honour of seeing one of you to take your directions, and relieve myself of the credentials, which M. le Maréchal will give me for you all: commending myself hereupon humbly to your good graces, and praying God to grant you, Messieurs, long and happy life. From Libourne, the 30th July* 1585. *Your humble servant and brother,*

MONTAIGNE.

[1] Fr. *plate-forme.* At that time the word had not yet acquired its secondary meaning. The Château Trompette adjoined the quarter of Bordeaux known as the *Chapeau Rouge.* It has long since been demolished.

[2] The Maréchal de Matignon.

[3] This refers to the plague then raging, and which carried off 14,000 persons at Bordeaux.

[4] On the right bank of the Garonne, opposite Bordeaux.

XXIX

To the Same.

Messieurs,—I communicated to M. le Maréchal the letter which you sent me, and what the bearer said that he was charged by you to let me know, and he has begged me to request you to send him the drum which was at Bourg on your behalf. He also said to me that he prays you to send forward to him at once Captains Saint-Aulaye and Mathelin, and to collect as large a number of mariners and seamen as can be found. As to the bad example and the injustice of taking women and children prisoners, I am by no means of opinion that we should imitate the conduct of others, which I have equally mentioned to the said Monsieur Maréchal, who has charged me to write to you hereupon to do nothing till you have fuller information. Whereupon I recommend myself right humbly to your good graces, and pray God to grant you, Messieurs, long and happy life. From Feuillas, the 31st July 1585. Your humble brother and servant, MONTAIGNE.

XXX

To the Maréchal DE MATIGNON.[1]

Monseigneur,—You have heard of our baggage being taken from us under our eyes in the forest of Villebois: then, after a good deal of discussion and

[1] "According to Dr. Payen, this letter belongs to 1588. Its authenticity has been called in question; but wrongly, in our opinion. See *Documents Inedits*, 1847, p. 12."—Note in *Essais*, ed. Paris, 1854, iv. 381. The misadventure occurred when the writer was on his way to Paris to superintend the second edition of his Essays. All the property was subsequently recovered. The text is very obscure.

delay, of the capture being pronounced illegal by the Prince. We dared not, however, proceed on our way, from an uncertainty as to the safety of our persons, which should have been clearly expressed on our passports. The League has done this through M. de Barraut and M. de la Rochefocaut; the storm has burst on me, who had my money in my box. I have recovered none of it, and most of my papers and clothes[1] *remain in their possession. We have not seen the Prince. We have lost fifty écus for the Comte de Thorigny, some silver plate and a few articles of clothing.*[2] *He diverged from his route to pay a visit to the mourning ladies at Montresor, where are the remains of his two brothers and grandmother, and came to us again in this town, whence we start shortly. The journey to Normandy is relinquished. The King has despatched MM. de Bellieure and de la Guiche to M. de Guise to summon him to court; we shall be there on Thursday.*

From Orleans, this 16th of February, in the morning [1588].—*Your very humble servant,*

MONTAIGNE.

XXXI

To the Same.

Monseigneur,—Mademoiselle de Mauriac is arranging to conclude the marriage of the Sieur de Mauriac, her son, with one of the sisters of

[1] The French word is *hardes*, which St. John renders *things*. But compare Chambers's "Domestic Annals of Scotland," 2nd. ed. i. 48. A *hardit* was the name of a coin both in gold and silver in the early French series.

[2] The French text in the Variorum of 1872–1900 is: "Il s'est perdu cinquante tant d'escus pour monsieur le comte de Thorigny vn' euiere dariant et quelques hardes de peu."

M. d'Aubeterre. The matter is so far advanced, they tell me, that nothing remains to be done but the presence of Mlle. de Brigneus, her eldest daughter, who is at Lectour with her husband. She begs you very humbly to grant her a passport for her said daughter and her little party to come to Mauriac, and as her kinsman, and having the honour to be known to you, she desired me to make you the request, and has sent me a letter, which she says is written by M. d'Aubeterre—I believe to the same purport. I do so very humbly and affectionately, if it is not a thing which is displeasing or troublesome in your eyes. Otherwise this will at least serve to bring me back to your remembrance, from which I may have been dislodged through my slight merit and the long space of time since I had the honour of seeing you. From Montaigne, this 12th of June [1587 ?].[1] *I am, Monseigneur, your very humble servant,* MONTAIGNE.

XXXII[2]

To Mademoiselle PAULMIER.

Mademoiselle,—My friends know that, from the first moment of our acquaintance, I have destined a copy of my book for you; for I feel that you have done it much honour. But the courtesy of M. Paulmier deprives me of the pleasure of giving it to you, for he has obliged me since a great deal beyond the worth of my book. You will accept it then, if you please, as having been yours before I owed it to you, and will confer on me the favour of loving it, whether

[1] From the statement that Montaigne had not recently written to, or seen the Marshal, it is to be inferred that the present letter, without note of the year, belongs to 1586 or 1587.

[2] This letter, at the time of publication of the *variorum* edition of 1854, appears to have been in private hands. See vol. iv. p. 382.

for its own sake or for mine; and I will keep my debt to M. Paulmier undischarged, that I may requite him, if I have at some other time the means of serving him.

[? 1588.] [No signature.]

XXXIII

To Henry IV.[1]

Sire,—It is to be above the weight and crowd of your great and important affairs to know how to lend yourself and attend to small matters in their turn, according to the duty of your royal authority, which exposes you at all times to every description and degree of men and employments. Yet, that your Majesty deigned to consider my letter and direct a reply, I prefer to owe to your benignity rather than your vigour of mind. I have always looked forward to that same fortune in you which you now enjoy, and you may recollect that even when I could only make avowal of it to my heart, I did not omit to view with goodwill your successes. Now, with the greater reason and freedom I embrace them with full affection. They serve you there in effect; but they serve you here no less by reputation: the echo carries as much weight as the blow. We should not be able to derive from the justice of your case such powerful arguments for the maintenance and reduction of your subjects, as we do from the reports of the success of your undertakings; and I can assure your Majesty, that the recent changes to your advantage, which you observe hereabouts, the prosperous issue at Dieppe, have opportunely seconded the honest zeal and marvellous

1 The original is in the French National Library, in the Dupuy collection. It was first discovered by M. Achille Jubinal, who printed it with a facsimile of the entire autograph in 1850. St. John gives the date wrongly as the 1st January 1590. The facsimile is here reproduced.

prudence of M. le Maréchal de Matignon, from whom I flatter myself that you do not daily receive accounts of such good and signal services without remembering my assurances and expectations. I look to this coming summer, not only for fruits to nourish us, but for those of our common tranquillity, and that it will pass over our heads with the same even tenor of happiness, dissipating, like its predecessors, all the fine promises with which your adversaries sustain the spirits of their followers. The popular inclinations resemble a tidal wave; if the current once commences in your favour, it will go on of its own force to the end. I could have desired much that the private gain of the soldiers of your army, and the necessity for satisfying them, had not deprived you, especially in this principal town, of the glorious credit of treating your mutinous subjects, in the midst of victory, with greater clemency than their own protectors, and that, as distinguished from a passing and usurped repute, you could have shown them to be really your own, by the exercise of a paternal and truly royal protection. In the conduct of such affairs as you have in hand, men are obliged to have recourse to uncommon expedients. If it is always seen that where conquests by their magnitude and difficulty are not to be carried out by arms and force, the end has been accomplished by clemency and generosity, excellent lures to draw men particularly toward the just and legitimate side. If there is to be severity and punishment, they must be foregone, when the mastery has been won. A great conqueror of the passed time boasts that he gave his enemies as great an inducement to love him as his friends. And here we feel already some effect of good augury in the impression upon your rebellious towns by the comparison of their rough treatment with that of those which

are under your obedience. Desiring your Majesty a happiness more tangible and less hazardous, and that you may be beloved rather than feared by your people, and holding your welfare and theirs to be of necessity attached together, I rejoice to think that the progress which you make toward victory is also one toward more practical conditions of peace.

Sire, your letter of the last of November came to my hand only just now, when the time which it pleased you to name for meeting you at Tours had already passed. I take it as a singular favour that you should have deigned to desire to see me, so useless a person, but yours more by affection than from duty. You have acted very commendably in adapting yourself, in the matter of external forms, to the height of your new fortune; but your debonnaireness and affability of your intimate relations you are equally praiseworthy in not changing. You have been pleased to take thought not only for my age, but for the desire which I have to see you, where you may be at rest from these laborious agitations. Will not that be soon at Paris, Sire? and may nothing prevent me from presenting myself there! From Montaigne, the 18th of January 1590. Your very humble and very obedient servant and subject,

MONTAIGNE.

XXXIV

To —— ——[1]

Monsieur,—I address you this writing, seeing that the time and necessity enjoin it, assuring you that I

[1] Who was the recipient of this communication does not appear. It is written with even more than usual negligence, and in places is hardly intelligible. Some of the expressions are very unusual. I take the text from MM. Courbet and Royer's *variorum*, not having access to the autograph.

recognise the honesty of what you say, better than I [appear to] know how to do at this moment.[1] *Now, in the uncertain condition of our finances, I have taken the opportunity to shew the care and attachment which I know to be due to you these long years for good and loyal services. Indeed, I so much wish to prove this to you that herewith is the title, of which M. Etienne will provide for the discharge, as soon as I shall present it to him.*[2] *That is what I beg to be accorded to me as a testimony of your good friendship, and as a thing most acceptable to me.*[3] *. . . Hereupon I pray God to give you long and happy life. X. of Ma[rch or May]*, 1590.

MONTAIGNE.

XXXV

To HENRY IV.[4]

Sire,—That which it pleased your Majesty to write to me on the 20th of July was not delivered to me till this morning, and found me laid up with a very violent tertian ague, a complaint epidemic in this part of the country during the last month. Sire, I consider myself greatly honoured by the receipt of your commands, and I have not omitted to communicate to M. le Maréchal de Matignon three times

[1] "Je scai recognoistre honestes de vostre dire mieulx que je vous le fest presentemant."

[2] "Mesme ie uous les veus ie bien prouuer que voicy le tiltre dont Monsieur Estienne pouruoiera à lacquittement toutefois que se presenteres a luy."

[3] After this, in the French, follows: "Dont ie tiens le caut pour recours."

[4] This letter is also in the national collection, among the Dupuy papers. It was first printed in the *Journal de l'Instruction Publique*, November 4, 1846. Montaigne was at this time indisposed, and the body of the letter is in the hand of an amanuensis.

most emphatically my intention and obligation to proceed in search of him, and even so far as to indicate the route by which I might safely join him, if he thought proper; whereto having received no answer, I consider that he has weighed the length and risk of the journey to me. Sire, your Majesty will do me the favour to believe, if you please, that I shall never complain of the expense on occasions where I should not hesitate to devote my life. I have never derived any substantial benefit whatever from the bounty of kings any more than I have solicited or deserved such; nor have I had any recompense for the services which I have performed for them: whereof your Majesty is in part aware. What I have done for your predecessors I shall do still more readily for you. I am as rich, Sire, as I desire to be. When I shall have exhausted my purse in attendance on your Majesty at Paris, I will take the liberty to tell you, and then, if you should regard me worthy of being retained any longer in your suite, you shall have me at a cheaper rate than the humblest of your officers.

Sire, I pray God for your prosperity and health. From Montaigne, this 2nd of September [1590]. *Your very humble and very obedient servant and subject,*

MONTAIGNE.

ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE

BOOK THE FIRST

THE AUTHOR TO THE READER[1]

READER, here is a book of good faith[2]; it doth at the outset forewarn thee that in it I have proposed to myself no other than a domestic and private end: I have had no consideration either to thy service or to my glory. My strength is not capable of such a design. I have dedicated it to the private commodity of my kinsfolk and friends, so that, having lost me (which they have to do shortly), they may therein recover some traits of my conditions and humours, and by that means preserve more whole and more vivid the knowledge they had of me. Had my intention been to seek the world's favour, I should surely have adorned myself with borrowed beauties: I desire herein to be viewed, as you see me, in mine own simple, natural, and ordinary manner, without study and artifice: for it is myself I paint. My defects are herein to be read to the life: my imperfections and my natural form, so far as public respect permitted me. If I had lived among those nations which (they say) yet dwell under the sweet liberty of primitive laws of nature, I assure thee I would most willingly have painted myself quite fully and quite

[1] Omitted by Cotton. This address is very characteristic. The writer starts by commending his book to the public as worthy of attention and confidence; he then diverges into an announcement that it has been composed for the use of his own circle; he turns round once more to explain the peculiar character of the essays; and he concludes by wishing the reader good-day, and telling him that it is hardly worth his while to look into the book.

[2] *Un livre de bonne foy*, in the orig. Fr.

naked. Thus, reader, myself am the matter of my book: there's no reason thou shouldst employ thy leisure on so frivolous and vain a subject. Adieu, then!

From Montaigne, the 1st March 1580.[1]

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[1] *See* Bonnefon, *Montaigne*, 1893, p. 254. The book had been licensed for the press on the 9th May previous. The edition of 1588 has 12th June 1588.

ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE

BOOK THE FIRST

CHAPTER I

BY DIFFERENT METHODS MEN ARRIVE AT THE SAME END

The most usual way of appeasing the indignation of such as we have any way offended, when we see them in possession of the power of revenge, and find that we absolutely lie at their mercy, is by submission, to move them to commiseration and pity; and yet bravery, constancy, and resolution, however quite contrary means, have sometimes served to produce the same effect.[1]

Edward, Prince of Wales (the same who so long governed our Guienne, a personage whose condition and fortune have in them a great deal of the most notable and most considerable parts of grandeur), having been highly incensed by the Limousins, and taking their city by assault, was not, either by the cries of the people, or the prayers and tears of the women and children, abandoned to slaughter and prostrate at his feet

[1] Florio's version begins thus: "The most vsuall waie to appease those minds wee have offended, when revenge lies in their hands, and that we stand at their mercie, is by submission to move them to commiseration and pity: Neuertheless, courage, constancie, and resolution (means altogether opposite) have sometimes wrought the same effect." I do not pretend to follow the text of Florio, which is grossly inaccurate and illiterate; I merely furnish a few comparative extracts.

for mercy, to be stayed from prosecuting his revenge; till, penetrating further into the town, he at last took notice of three French gentlemen,[1] who with incredible bravery alone sustained the power of his victorious army. Then it was that consideration and respect unto so remarkable a valour first stopped the torrent of his fury, and that his clemency, beginning with these three cavaliers, was afterwards extended to all the remaining inhabitants of the city.

Scanderbeg,[2] Prince of Epirus, pursuing one of his soldiers with purpose to kill him, the soldier, having in vain tried by all the ways of humility and supplication to appease him, resolved, as his last refuge, to face about and await him sword in hand: which behaviour of his gave a sudden stop to his captain's fury, who, for seeing him assume so notable a resolution, received him into grace; an example, however, that might suffer another interpretation with such as have not read of the prodigious force and valour of that prince.

The Emperor Conrad III. having besieged Guelph, Duke of Bavaria,[3] would not be prevailed upon, what mean and unmanly satisfactions soever were tendered to him, to condescend to milder conditions than that the ladies and gentlewomen only who were in the town with the duke might go out without violation of their honour, on foot, and with so much only as they could carry about them. Whereupon they, out of magnanimity of heart, presently contrived to carry out, upon their shoulders, their husbands and children, and

[1] These were Jean de Villemure, Hugh de la Roche, and Roger de Beaufort.—Froissart, i. c. 283. The city was Limoges.

[2] Georgius Castriota, called by the Turks *Iskander-Beg*, or the Prince Alexander, and ordinarily and corruptly as in the text.

[3] In 1140, in Weinsberg, Upper Bavaria.

the duke himself; a sight at which the emperor was so pleased, that, ravished with the generosity of the action, he wept for joy, and immediately extinguishing in his heart the mortal and capital hatred he had conceived against this duke, he from that time forward treated him and his with all humanity. The one and the other of these two ways would with great facility work upon my nature; for I have a marvellous propensity to mercy and mildness, and to such a degree that I fancy of the two I should sooner surrender my anger to compassion than to esteem. And yet pity is reputed a vice amongst the Stoics, who will that we succour the afflicted, but not that we should be so affected with their sufferings as to suffer with them. I conceived these examples not ill suited to the question in hand, and the rather because therein we observe these great souls assaulted and tried by these two several ways, to resist the one without relenting, and to be shook and subjected by the other. It may be true that to suffer a man's heart to be totally subdued by compassion may be imputed to facility, effeminacy, and over-tenderness; whence it comes to pass that the weaker natures, as of women, children, and the common sort of people, are the most subject to it: but after having resisted and disdained the power of groans and tears, to yield to the sole reverence of the sacred image of Valour, this can be no other than the effect of a strong and inflexible soul enamoured of and honouring masculine and obstinate courage. Nevertheless, astonishment and admiration may, in less generous minds, beget a like effect: witness the people of Thebes, who, having put two of their generals upon trial for their lives for having continued in arms beyond

the precise term of their commission, very hardly pardoned Pelopidas, who, bowing under the weight of so dangerous an accusation, made no manner of defence for himself, nor produced other arguments than prayers and supplications; whereas, on the contrary, Epaminondas, falling to recount magniloquently the exploits he had performed in their service, and, after a haughty and arrogant manner reproaching them with ingratitude and injustice, they had not the heart to proceed any further in his trial, but broke up the court and departed, the whole assembly highly commending the high courage of this personage.[1]

Dionysius the elder, after having, by a tedious siege and through exceeding great difficulties, taken the city of Reggio, and in it the governor Phyton, a very gallant man, who had made so obstinate a defence, was resolved to make him a tragical example of his revenge: in order whereunto he first told him, "That he had the day before caused his son and all his kindred to be drowned." To which Phyton returned no other answer but this: "That they were then by one day happier than he." After which, causing him to be stripped, and delivering him into the hands of the tormentors, he was by them not only dragged through the streets of the town, and most ignominiously and cruelly whipped, but moreover vilified with most bitter and contumelious language: yet still he maintained his courage entire all the way, with a strong voice and undaunted countenance proclaiming the honourable and glorious cause of his death; namely, for that he would not deliver up his country into the hands of a tyrant; at the same time denouncing against him a speedy chastisement

[1] Plutarch, *How far a Man may praise Himself*, c. 5.

from the offended gods. At which Dionysius, reading in his soldiers' looks, that instead of being incensed at the haughty language of this conquered enemy, to the contempt of their captain and his triumph, they were not only struck with admiration of so rare a virtue, but moreover inclined to mutiny, and were even ready to rescue the prisoner out of the hangman's hands, he caused the torturing to cease, and afterwards privately caused him to be thrown into the sea.[1]

Man (in good earnest) is a marvellous vain, fickle, and unstable subject, and on whom it is very hard to form any certain and uniform judgment. For Pompey could pardon the whole city of the Mamertines, though furiously incensed against it, upon the single account of the virtue and magnanimity of one citizen, Zeno,[2] who took the fault of the public wholly upon himself; neither entreated other favour, but alone to undergo the punishment for all: and yet Sylla's host, having in the city of Perugia[3] manifested the same virtue, obtained nothing by it, either for himself or his fellow-citizens.

And, directly contrary to my first examples, the bravest of all men, and who was reputed so gracious to all those he overcame, Alexander, having, after many great difficulties, forced the city of Gaza, and, entering, found Betis, who commanded there, and of whose valour in the time of this siege he had most marvellous manifest proof, alone, forsaken by all his soldiers, his armour hacked and hewed to pieces, covered all over with blood and wounds, and yet still fighting in the crowd of a number of

[1] Diod. Sic., xiv. 29.
[2] Plutarch calls him Stheno, and also Sthemnus and Sthenis.
[3] Plutarch says Preneste, a town of Latium.

Macedonians, who were laying on him on all sides, he said to him, nettled at so dear-bought a victory (for, in addition to the other damage, he had two wounds newly received in his own person), "Thou shalt not die, Betis, as thou dost intend; be sure thou shalt suffer all the torments that can be inflicted on a captive." To which menace the other returning no other answer, but only a fierce and disdainful look; "What," says Alexander, observing his haughty and obstinate silence, "is he too stiff to bend a knee! Is he too proud to utter one suppliant word! Truly, I will conquer this silence; and if I cannot force a word from his mouth, I will, at least, extract a groan from his heart." And thereupon converting his anger into fury, presently commanded his heels to be bored through, causing him, alive, to be dragged, mangled, and dismembered at a cart's tail.[1] Was it that the height of courage was so natural and familiar to this conqueror, that because he could not admire, he respected it the less? Or was it that he conceived valour to be a virtue so peculiar to himself, that his pride could not, without envy, endure it in another? Or was it that the natural impetuosity of his fury was incapable of opposition? Certainly, had it been capable of moderation, it is to be believed that in the sack and desolation of Thebes, to see so many valiant men, lost and totally destitute of any further defence, cruelly massacred before his eyes, would have appeased it: where there were above six thousand put to the sword, of whom not one was seen to fly, or heard to cry out for quarter; but, on the contrary, every one running here and there to seek out and to provoke the

[1] Quintus Curtius, iv. 6. This act of cruelty has been doubted, notwithstanding the statement of Curtius.

victorious enemy to help them to an honourable end. Not one was seen who, however weakened with wounds, did not in his last gasp yet endeavour to revenge himself, and with all the arms of a brave despair, to sweeten his own death in the death of an enemy. Yet did their valour create no pity, and the length of one day was not enough to satiate the thirst of the conqueror's revenge, but the slaughter continued to the last drop of blood that was capable of being shed, and stopped not till it met with none but unarmed persons, old men, women, and children, of them to carry away to the number of thirty thousand slaves.

CHAPTER II

OF SORROW

No man living is more free from this passion than I, who yet neither like it in myself nor admire it in others, and yet generally the world, as a settled thing, is pleased to grace it with a particular esteem, clothing therewith wisdom, virtue, and conscience. Foolish and sordid guise![1] The Italians have more fitly baptized by this name[2] malignity; for 'tis a quality always hurtful, always idle and vain; and as being cowardly, mean, and base, it is by the Stoics expressly and particularly forbidden to their sages.

But the story[3] says that Psammitichus, King of Egypt, being defeated and taken prisoner by

[1] "No man is more free from this passion than I, for I neither love nor regard it: albeit the world hath vndertaken, as it were upon covenant, to grace it with a particular favour. Therewith they adorne age, vertue, and conscience. Oh foolish and base ornament!"—Florio, 1613, p. 3. [2] La tristezza. [3] Herodotus, iii. 14.

Cambyses, King of Persia, seeing his own daughter pass by him as prisoner, and in a wretched habit, with a bucket to draw water, though his friends about him were so concerned as to break out into tears and lamentations, yet he himself remained unmoved, without uttering a word, his eyes fixed upon the ground; and seeing, moreover, his son immediately after led to execution, still maintained the same countenance; till spying at last one of his domestic and familiar friends dragged away amongst the captives, he fell to tearing his hair and beating his breast, with all the other extravagances of extreme sorrow.[1]

A story that may very fitly be coupled with another of the same kind, of recent date, of a prince of our own nation, who being at Trent, and having news there brought him of the death of his elder brother, a brother on whom depended the whole support and honour of his house, and soon after of that of a younger brother, the second hope of his family, and having withstood these two assaults with an exemplary resolution; one of his servants happening a few days after to die, he suffered his constancy to be overcome by this last accident; and, parting with his courage, so abandoned himself to sorrow and mourning, that some thence were forward to conclude that he was only touched to the quick by this last stroke of fortune; but, in truth, it was, that being before

[1] This turn of sentiment is noticed elsewhere; and compare Shakespear, *Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1.—

> "Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife,
> Which is as dear to me as life itself;
> But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
> Are not with me esteem'd above thy life;
> I would lose all—ay, sacrifice them all
> Here to this devil, to deliver you."

brimful of grief, the least addition overflowed the bounds of all patience. Which, I think, might also be said of the former example, did not the story proceed to tell us that Cambyses asking Psammitichus, "Why, not being moved at the calamity of his son and daughter, he should with so great impatience bear the misfortune of his friend?" "It is," answered he, "because only this last affliction was to be manifested by tears, the two first far exceeding all manner of expression."

And, peradventure, something like this might be working in the fancy of the ancient painter,[1] who having, in the sacrifice of Iphigenia, to represent the sorrow of the assistants proportionably to the several degrees of interest every one had in the death of this fair innocent virgin, and having, in the other figures, laid out the utmost power of his art, when he came to that of her father, he drew him with a veil over his face, meaning thereby that no kind of countenance was capable of expressing such a degree of sorrow. Which is also the reason why the poets feign the miserable mother, Niobe, having first lost seven sons, and then afterwards as many daughters (overwhelmed with her losses), to have been at last transformed into a rock—

"Diriguisse malis,"[2]

thereby to express that melancholic, dumb, and deaf stupefaction, which benumbs all our faculties, when oppressed with accidents greater than we are able to bear. And, indeed, the violence and impression of an excessive grief must of necessity astonish the soul, and wholly deprive her of her ordinary

[1] Cicero, *De Orator.*, c. 22; Pliny, xxxv. 10.

[2] "To have been petrified by her misfortunes."—Ovid, *Met.*, vi. 304.

functions: as it happens to every one of us, who, upon any sudden alarm of very ill news, find ourselves surprised, stupefied, and in a manner deprived of all power of motion, so that the soul, beginning to vent itself in tears and lamentations, seems to free and disengage itself from the sudden oppression, and to have obtained some room to work itself out at greater liberty.

"Et via vix tandem voci laxata dolore est."[1]

In the war that Ferdinand made upon the widow of King John of Hungary, about Buda, a man-at-arms was particularly taken notice of by every one for his singular gallant behaviour in a certain encounter; and, unknown, highly commended, and lamented, being left dead upon the place: but by none so much as by Raïsciac, a German lord, who was infinitely enamoured of so rare a valour. The body being brought off, and the count, with the common curiosity coming to view it, the armour was no sooner taken off but he immediately knew him to be his own son, a thing that added a second blow to the compassion of all the beholders; only he, without uttering a word, or turning away his eyes from the woeful object, stood fixedly contemplating the body of his son, till the vehemency of sorrow having overcome his vital spirits, made him sink down stone-dead to the ground.—

"Chi puo dir com' egli arde, è in picciol fuoco,"[2]

say the Innamoratos, when they would represent an insupportable passion:—

[1] "And at length and with difficulty is a passage opened by grief for utterance."—*Æneid*, xi. 151.

[2] "He who can say how he burns with love, has little fire."—Petrarca, *Sonetto* 137.

"Misero quod omneis
Eripit sensus mihi: nam simul te,
Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi,
Quod loquar amens.
Lingua sed torpet: tenuis sub artus
Flamma demanat; sonitu suopte
Tintinant aures; gemina teguntur
Lumina nocte."[1]

Neither is it in the height and greatest fury of the fit that we are in a condition to pour out our complaints or our amorous persuasions, the soul being at that time over-burdened, and labouring with profound thoughts; and the body dejected and languishing with desire; and thence it is that sometimes proceed those accidental impotencies that so unseasonably surprise the lover, and that frigidity which by the force of an immoderate ardour seizes him even in the very lap of fruition.[2] For all passions that suffer themselves to be relished and digested are but moderate:—

"Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent."[3]

A surprise of unexpected joy does likewise often produce the same effect:—

"Ut me conspexit venientem, et Troja circum
Arma amens vidit, magnis exterrita monstris,
Diriguit visu in medio, calor ossa reliquit,
Labitur, et longo vix tandem tempore fatur."[4]

[1] "Love deprives me of all my faculties: Lesbia, when once in thy presence, I have not left the power to tell my distracting passion: my tongue becomes torpid; a subtle flame creeps through my veins; my ears tingle in deafness; my eyes are veiled with darkness."—Catullus, *Epig.*, li. 5.

[2] The edition of 1588 has here, "An accident not unknown to myself."

[3] "Light griefs speak: deep sorrows are dumb."—Seneca, *Hippolytus*, act ii. scene 3.

[4] "When she beheld me advancing, and saw, with stupefaction, the Trojan arms around me, terrified with so great a prodigy, she fainted away at the very sight: vital warmth forsook her limbs: she sinks down, and, after a long interval, with difficulty speaks."—*Æneid*, iii: 306.

Besides the examples of the Roman lady, who died for joy to see her son safe returned from the defeat of Cannæ; and of Sophocles and of Dionysius the Tyrant,[1] who died of joy; and of Thalna, who died in Corsica, reading news of the honours the Roman Senate had decreed in his favour, we have, moreover, one in our time, of Pope Leo X., who upon news of the taking of Milan, a thing he had so ardently desired, was rapt with so sudden an excess of joy that he immediately fell into a fever and died.[2] And for a more notable testimony of the imbecility of human nature, it is recorded by the ancients[3] that Diodorus the dialectician died upon the spot, out of an extreme passion of shame, for not having been able in his own school, and in the presence of a great auditory, to disengage himself from a nice argument that was propounded to him. I, for my part, am very little subject to these violent passions; I am naturally of a stubborn apprehension, which also, by reasoning, I every day harden and fortify.

CHAPTER III

OUR AFFECTIONS CARRY THEMSELVES BEYOND US

Such as accuse mankind of the folly of gaping after future things, and advise us to make our benefit of those which are present, and to set up our rest upon them, as having no grasp upon that which is to

[1] Pliny, vii. 53. Diodorus Siculus, however (xv. c. 30), tells us that Dionysius "was so overjoyed at the news that he made a great sacrifice upon it to the gods, prepared sumptuous feasts, to which he invited all his friends, and therein drank so excessively that it threw him into a very bad distemper."

[2] Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. xiv.

[3] Pliny, *ut suprâ*.

come, even less than that which we have upon what is past, have hit upon the most universal of human errors, if that may be called an error to which nature herself has disposed us, in order to the continuation of her own work, prepossessing us, amongst several others, with this deceiving imagination, as being more jealous of our action than afraid of our knowledge.

We are never present with, but always beyond ourselves: fear, desire, hope, still push us on towards the future, depriving us, in the meantime, of the sense and consideration of that which is to amuse us with the thought of what shall be, even when we shall be no more.[1]

"Calamitosus est animus futuri auxius."[2]

We find this great precept often repeated in Plato, "Do thine own work, and know thyself." Of which two parts, both the one and the other generally comprehend our whole duty, and do each of them in like manner involve the other; for who will do his own work aright will find that his first lesson is to know what he is, and that which is proper to himself; and who rightly understands himself will never mistake another man's work for his own, but will love and improve himself above all other things, will refuse superfluous employments, and reject all unprofitable thoughts and propositions. As folly, on the one side, though it should enjoy all it desire, would notwithstanding never be content, so, on the other, wisdom, acquiescing in the present, is never dissatisfied with itself.[3] Epicurus dispenses his sages from all foresight and care of the future.

[1] Compare Rousseau, *Emile*, livre ii.
[2] "The mind anxious about the future is unhappy."—Seneca, *Epist.*, 98.
[3] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæst.*, 57, v. 18.

Amongst those laws that relate to the dead, I look upon that to be very sound by which the actions of princes are to be examined after their decease.[1] They are equals with, if not masters of the laws, and, therefore, what justice could not inflict upon their persons, 'tis but reason should be executed upon their reputations and the estates of their successors—things that we often value above life itself. 'Tis a custom of singular advantage to those countries where it is in use, and by all good princes to be desired, who have reason to take it ill, that the memories of the wicked should be used with the same reverence and respect with their own. We owe subjection and obedience to all our kings, whether good or bad, alike, for that has respect unto their office; but as to esteem and affection, these are only due to their virtue. Let us grant to political government to endure them with patience, however unworthy; to conceal their vices; and to assist them with our recommendation in their indifferent actions, whilst their authority stands in need of our support. But, the relation of prince and subject being once at an end, there is no reason we should deny the expression of our real opinions to our own liberty and common justice, and especially to interdict to good subjects the glory of having reverently and faithfully served a prince, whose imperfections were to them so well known; this were to deprive posterity of a useful example. And such as, out of respect to some private obligation, unjustly espouse and vindicate the memory of a faulty prince, do private right at the expense of public justice. Livy does very truly say,[2] "That the language of men bred up in courts is always full of vain ostentation and false testimony, every

[1] Diodorus Siculus, i. 6.

[2] xxxv. 48.

one indifferently magnifying his own master, and stretching his commendation to the utmost extent of virtue and sovereign grandeur." Some may condemn the freedom of those two soldiers who so roundly answered Nero to his beard; the one being asked by him why he bore him ill-will? "I loved thee," answered he, "whilst thou wert worthy of it, but since thou art become a parricide, an incendiary, a player, and a coachman, I hate thee as thou dost deserve." And the other, why he should attempt to kill him? "Because," said he, "I could think of no other remedy against thy perpetual mischiefs."[1] But the public and universal testimonies that were given of him after his death (and so will be to all posterity, both of him and all other wicked princes like him), of his tyrannies and abominable deportment, who, of a sound judgment, can reprove them?

I am scandalised, that in so sacred a government as that of the Lacedæmonians there should be mixed so hypocritical a ceremony at the interment of their kings; where all their confederates and neighbours, and all sorts and degrees of men and women, as well as their slaves, cut and slashed their foreheads in token of sorrow, repeating in their cries and lamentations that that king (let him have been as wicked as the devil) was the best that ever they had[2]; by this means attributing to his quality the praise that only belongs to merit, and that of right is due to supreme desert, though lodged in the lowest and most inferior subject.

Aristotle, who will still have a hand in everything, makes a *quære* upon the saying of Solon, that none can be said to be happy until he is dead: "whether, then, he who has lived and died according to his heart's desire, if he have left an ill repute behind

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.*, xv. 67. [2] Herodotus, vi. 68.

him, and that his posterity be miserable, can be said to be happy?" Whilst we have life and motion, we convey ourselves by fancy and preoccupation, whither and to what we please; but once out of being, we have no more any manner of communication with that which is, and it had therefore been better said by Solon that man is never happy, because never so, till he is no more :—

> "Quisquam
> Vix radicitus e vita se tollit, et eicit;
> Sed facit esse sui quiddam super inscius ipse, . . .
> Nec removet satis a projecto corpore et illud
> Se fingit."[1]

Bertrand de Guesclin,[2] dying at the siege of the Castle of Rancon, near unto Puy, in Auvergne,[3] the besieged were afterwards, upon surrender, enjoined to lay down the keys of the place upon the corpse of the dead general. Bartolommeo d'Alviano, the Venetian General, happening to die in the service of the Republic in Brescia, and his corpse being to be carried through the territory of Verona, an enemy's country, most of the army were inclined to demand safe-conduct from the Veronese; but Teodoro Trivulzio opposed the motion, rather choosing to make his way by force of arms, and to run the hazard of a battle, saying it was by no means fit that he who in his life was never afraid of his enemies should seem to apprehend them when he was dead. In truth, in affairs of the same nature, by the Greek laws, he who made suit to an enemy for a body to give it burial

[1] "Scarcely one man can, even in dying, wholly detach himself from the idea of life; in his ignorance he must needs imagine that there is in him something that survives him, and cannot sufficiently separate or emancipate himself from his remains."—Lucretius, iii. 890.

[2] In orig. *Glesquin*, and the name is spelled in a variety of ways.

[3] July 3, 1380.

renounced his victory, and had no more right to erect a trophy, and he to whom such suit was made was reputed victor. By this means it was that Nicias lost the advantage he had visibly obtained over the Corinthians, and that Agesilaus, on the contrary, assured that which he had before very doubtfully gained over the Bœotians.[1]

These things might appear strange, had it not been a general practice in all ages not only to extend the concern of ourselves beyond this life, but, moreover, to fancy that the favour of Heaven does not only very often accompany us to the grave, but has also, even after life, a concern for our ashes. Of which there are so many ancient examples (to say nothing of those of our own observation), that it is not necessary I should longer insist upon it. Edward I., King of England, having in the long wars betwixt him and Robert, King of Scotland, had experience of how great importance his own immediate presence was to the success of his affairs, having ever been victorious in whatever he undertook in his own person, when he came to die, bound his son in a solemn oath that, so soon as he should be dead he should boil his body till the flesh parted from the bones, and bury the flesh, reserving the bones to carry continually with him in his army, so often as he should be obliged to go against the Scots, as if destiny had inevitably attached victory even to his remains. John Zisca, the same who, in vindication of Wicliffe's heresies, troubled the Bohemian state, left order that they should flay him after his death, and of his skin make a drum to carry in the war against his enemies, fancying it would contribute to the continuation of the successes he had always obtained

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Nicias*, c. ii.; *Life of Agesilaus*, c. vi.

in the wars against them. In like manner certain of the Indians, in their battles with the Spaniards, carried with them the bones of one of their captains, in consideration of the victories they had formerly obtained under his conduct. And other people of the same New World carry about with them, in their wars, the relics of valiant men who have died in battle, to incite their courage and advance their fortune. Of which examples the first reserve nothing for the tomb but the reputation they have acquired by their former achievements, but these attribute to them a certain present and active power.

The proceeding of le Capitaine Bayard is of a better complexion, who finding himself wounded to death with an arquebuss shot, and being importuned to retire out of the fight, made answer that he would not begin at the last gasp to turn his back to the enemy, and accordingly still fought on, till feeling himself too faint and no longer able to sit on his horse, he commanded his steward to set him down at the foot of a tree, but so that he might die with his face towards the enemy, which he did.

I must yet add another example, equally remarkable for the present consideration with any of the former. The Emperor Maximilian, great-grandfather to the now King Philip,[1] was a prince endowed throughout with great and extraordinary qualities, and amongst the rest with a singular beauty of person, but had withal a humour very contrary to that of other princes, who for the despatch of their most important affairs convert their close-stool into a chair of State, which was, that he would never permit any of his bedchamber,

[1] Philip II. of Spain.

how familiar soever, to see him in that posture, and would steal aside to make water as religiously as a virgin, shy to discover to his physician or any other whomsoever those parts that we are accustomed to conceal. I myself, who have so impudent a way of talking, am, nevertheless, naturally so modest this way, that unless at the importunity of necessity or pleasure, I scarcely ever communicate to the sight of any either those parts or actions that custom orders us to conceal, wherein I suffer more constraint than I conceive is very well becoming a man, especially of my profession. But he nourished this modest humour to such a degree of superstition as to give express orders in his last will that they should put him on drawers so soon as he should be dead ; to which, methinks, he would have done well to have added that he should be blindfolded, too, that put them on. The charge that Cyrus left with his children, that neither they, nor any other, should either see or touch his body after the soul was departed from it,[1] I attribute to some superstitious devotion of his ; for both his historian and himself, amongst their great qualities, marked the whole course of their lives with a singular respect and reverence to religion.

That story displeased me, which a great prince told me of a connection of mine, a man tolerably well known both in peace and war, that, coming to die in a very old age, of excessive pain of the stone, he spent the last hours of his life in an extraordinary solicitude about ordering the honour and ceremony of his funeral, pressing all the men of condition who came to see him to engage their word to attend him to his grave : importuning this

[1] Xenophon, *Cyropædia*, viii. 7.

very prince, who came to visit him at his last gasp, with a most earnest supplication that he would order his family to be there, and presenting before him several reasons and examples to prove that it was a respect due to a man of his condition; and seemed to die content, having obtained this promise, and appointed the method and order of his funeral parade. I have seldom heard of so persistent a vanity.

Another, though contrary curiosity (of which singularity, also, I do not want domestic example), seems to be somewhat akin to this, that a man shall cudgel his brains at the last moments of his life to contrive his obsequies to so particular and unusual a parsimony as of one servant with a lantern. I see this humour commended, and the appointment of Marcus Æmilius Lepidus, who forbade his heirs to bestow upon his hearse even the common ceremonies in use upon such occasions.[1] Is it yet temperance and frugality to avoid expense and pleasure of which the use and knowledge are imperceptible to us? See, here, an easy and cheap reformation. If instruction were at all necessary in this case, I should be of opinion that in this, as in all other actions of life, each person should regulate the matter according to his fortune; and the philosopher Lycon prudently ordered his friends to dispose of his body where they should think most fit, and as to his funeral, to order it neither too superfluous nor too mean.[2] For my part, I should wholly refer the ordering of this ceremony to custom, and shall, when the time comes, accordingly leave it to their discretion to whose lot it shall fall to do me that last office :—

[1] Livy, Epit. of Lib., xlviii.
[2] Diog. Laertius, v. 74.

"Totus hic locus est contemnendus in nobis, non negligendus in nostris"[1];

and it was a holy saying of a saint:—

"Curatio funeris, conditio sepulturæ, pompa exequiarum, magis sunt vivorum solatia, quam subsidia mortuorum."[2]

Which made Socrates answer Crito, who, at the hour of his death, asked him how he would be buried: "How you will," said he.[3] If I were to concern myself beyond the present about this affair, I should be most tempted, as the greatest satisfaction of this kind, to imitate those who in their lifetime entertain themselves with the ceremony and honours of their own obsequies beforehand, and are pleased with beholding their own dead countenance in marble. Happy are they who can gratify their senses by insensibility, and live by their death!

I am ready to conceive an implacable hatred against all popular domination, though I think it the most natural and equitable of all, so oft as I call to mind the inhuman injustice of the people of Athens, who, without remission, or once vouchsafing to hear what they had to say for themselves, put to death their brave captains newly returned triumphant from a naval victory they had obtained over the Lacedæmonians near the Arginusian Isles, the most bloody and obstinate engagement that ever the Greeks fought at sea; because (after the victory) they followed up the blow and pursued the advantages presented to them by the rule of war,

[1] "This whole question of the place is to be contemned by us, but not to be neglected by our friends."—Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, i. 45.

[2] "The care of death, the place of sepulture, the pomps of obsequies, are rather consolations to the living than succours to the dead."—August., *De Civit. Dei*, i. 12.

[3] Plato, *Phædo, sub finem.*

rather than stay to gather up and bury their dead. And the execution is yet rendered more odious by the behaviour of Diomedon, who, being one of the condemned, and a man of most eminent virtue, political and military, after having heard the sentence, advancing to speak, no audience till then having been allowed, instead of laying before them his own cause, or the impiety of so cruel a sentence, only expressed a solicitude for his judges' preservation, beseeching the gods to convert this sentence to their good, and praying that, for neglecting to fulfil the vows which he and his companions had made (with which he also acquainted them) in acknowledgment of so glorious a success, they might not draw down the indignation of the gods upon them; and so without more words went courageously to his death.[1]

Fortune, a few years after, punished them in the same kind; for Chabrias, captain-general of their naval forces, having got the better of Pollis, Admiral of Sparta, at the Isle of Naxos, totally lost the fruits of his victory, one of very great importance to their affairs, in order not to incur the danger of this example, and so that he should not lose a few bodies of his dead friends that were floating in the sea, gave opportunity to a world of living enemies to sail away in safety, who afterwards made them pay dear for this unseasonable superstition :—

"Quæris, quo jaceas, post obitum, loco?
Quo non nata jacent."[2]

This other restores the sense of repose to a body without a soul :—

[1] Diod. Sic., xiii. 31.

[2] "Dost ask where thou shalt lie after death? Where things not born lie."—Seneca, *Troas.*, ii. 30.

"Neque sepulcrum, quo recipiatur, habeat: portum corporis, ubi, remissâ humanâ vitâ, corpus requiescat a malis."[1]

As nature demonstrates to us that several dead things retain yet an occult relation to life; wine changes its flavour and complexion in cellars, according to the changes and seasons of the vine from whence it came; and the flesh of venison alters its condition in the powdering-tub, and its taste according to the laws of the living flesh of its kind, as it is said.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE SOUL EXPENDS ITS PASSIONS UPON FALSE OBJECTS, WHEN THE TRUE ARE MISSED

A GENTLEMAN[2] of my country, marvellously tormented with the gout, being importuned by his physicians totally to abstain from all manner of salt meats, was wont pleasantly to reply, that in the extremity of his fits he must needs have something to quarrel with, and that railing at and cursing, one while the Bologna sausages, and another the dried tongues and the hams, was some mitigation to his pain. But, in good earnest, as the arm when it is advanced to strike, if it miss the blow, and goes by the wind, it pains us; and as also, that, to make a pleasant prospect, the sight

[1] "Nor let him have a sepulchre wherein he may be received, a haven for his body, where, life being gone, that body may rest from its troubles."—Ennius, *ap.* Cicero, *Tusc. Quæst.*, i. 44.

[2] "A Gentleman of ours exceedingly subject to the gowt, being instantly solicited by his Physitians to leave all manner of salt-meates, was wont to answer pleasantly, that when the fittes or panges of the disease tooke him, hee would have somebody to quarell with; and that crying and cursing, now against Boloni sausege, and sometimes by railing against salt-meats, tongues, and gammons of bakon, he found some ease."—Florio, 1613, p. 9.

should not be lost and dilated in vague air, but have some bound and object to limit and circumscribe it at a reasonable distance,

> "Ventus ut amittit vires, nisi robore densæ
> Occurrant sylvæ, spatio diffusus inani."[1]

So it seems that the soul, being transported and discomposed, turns its violence upon itself, if not supplied with something to oppose it, and therefore always requires an object at which to aim, and whereon to act. Plutarch says[2] of those who are delighted with little dogs and monkeys, that the amorous part that is in us, for want of a legitimate object, rather than lie idle, does after that manner forge and create one false and frivolous. And we see that the soul, in its passions, inclines rather to deceive itself, by creating a false and fantastical subject, even contrary to its own belief, than not to have something to work upon. After this manner brute beasts direct their fury to fall upon the stone or weapon that has hurt them, and with their teeth even execute revenge upon themselves for the injury they have received from another:—

> "Pannonis haud aliter, post ictum sævior ursa,
> Cui jaculum parvâ Lybis amentavit habenâ,
> Se rotat in vulnus, telumque irata receptum
> Impetit, et secum fugientem circuit hastam."[3]

What causes of the misadventures that befall us do we not invent? what is it that we do not lay the fault to, right or wrong, that we may have something to quarrel with? It is not those beautiful

[1] "As the wind loses its force diffused in void space, unless it in its strength encounters the thick wood."—Lucan, iii. 362.

[2] Life of Pericles, at the beginning.

[3] "So the she-bear, fiercer after the blow from the Lybian's thong-hurled dart, turns round upon the wound, and attacking the received spear, twists it, as she flies."—Lucan, vi. 220.

tresses you tear, nor is it the white bosom that in your anger you so unmercifully beat, that with an unlucky bullet have slain your beloved brother; quarrel with something else. Livy, speaking of the Roman army in Spain, says that for the loss of the two brothers,[1] their great captains:—

"Flere omnes repente, et offensare capita."[2]

'Tis a common practice. And the philosopher Bion said pleasantly of the king, who by handsful pulled his hair off his head for sorrow, "Does this man think that baldness is a remedy for grief?"[3] Who has not seen peevish gamesters chew and swallow the cards, and swallow the dice, in revenge for the loss of their money? Xerxes whipped the sea, and wrote a challenge to Mount Athos; Cyrus employed a whole army several days at work, to revenge himself of the river Gyndas, for the fright it had put him into in passing over it; and Caligula demolished a very beautiful palace for the pleasure his mother had once enjoyed there.[4]

I remember there was a story current, when I was a boy, that one of our neighbouring kings[5] having received a blow from the hand of God, swore he would be revenged, and in order to it, made proclamation that for ten years to come no one should pray to Him, or so much as mention Him throughout his dominions, or, so far as his authority went, believe in Him; by which they meant to paint not so much the folly as the

[1] Publius and Cneius Scipio.

[2] "All at once wept and tore their hair."—Livy, xxv. 37.

[3] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæst.*, iii. 26.

[4] I confess that I see no difficulty in the word *plaisir*, which has been supposed to be a misprint for de*plaisir*, for the mother of the emperor may have enjoyed her residence, although it was nominally a prison.—Seneca, *De Irâ*, iii. 22.

[5] Probably Alfonso XI. of Castile.

vainglory of the nation of which this tale was told. They are vices that always go together, but in truth such actions as these have in them still more of presumption than want of wit. Augustus Cæsar, having been tossed with a tempest at sea, fell to defying Neptune, and in the pomp of the Circensian games, to be revenged, deposed his statue from the place it had amongst the other deities. Wherein he was still less excusable than the former, and less than he was afterwards when, having lost a battle under Quintilius Varus in Germany, in rage and despair he went running his head against the wall, crying out, "O Varus! give me back my legions!" for these exceed all folly, forasmuch as impiety is joined therewith, invading God Himself, or at least Fortune, as if she had ears that were subject to our batteries; like the Thracians, who when it thunders or lightens, fall to shooting against heaven with Titanian vengeance, as if by flights of arrows they intended to bring God to reason. Though the ancient poet in Plutarch tells us

> "Point ne se faut couroucer aux affaires,
> Il ne leur chault de toutes nos cholères."[1]

But we can never enough decry the disorderly sallies of our minds.

CHAPTER V

WHETHER THE GOVERNOR OF A PLACE BESIEGED OUGHT TO GO OUT TO PARLEY

QUINTUS MARCIUS,[2] the Roman legate in the war against Perseus, King of Macedon, to gain time

[1] "We must not trouble the gods with our affairs; they take no heed of our passion."—Plutarch.

[2] Livy, xlii. 37.

wherein to reinforce his army, set on foot some overtures of accommodation, with which the king being lulled asleep, concluded a truce for some days, by this means giving his enemy opportunity and leisure to recruit his forces, which was afterwards the occasion of the king's final ruin. Yet the elder senators, mindful of their forefathers' manners, condemned this proceeding as degenerating from their ancient practice, which, they said, was to fight by valour, and not by artifice, surprises, and night-encounters; neither by pretended flight nor unexpected rallies to overcome their enemies; never making war till having first proclaimed it, and very often assigned both the hour and place of battle. Out of this generous principle it was that they delivered up to Pyrrhus his treacherous physician, and to the Etrurians their disloyal schoolmaster. This was, indeed, a procedure truly Roman, and nothing allied to the Grecian subtlety, nor to the Punic cunning, where it was reputed a victory of less glory to overcome by force than by fraud. Deceit may serve for a need, but he only confesses himself overcome who knows he is neither subdued by policy nor misadventure, but by dint of valour, man to man, in a fair and just war. It very well appears, by the discourse of these good old senators, that this fine sentence was not yet received amongst them :—

"Dolus, an virtus, quis in hoste requirat?"[1]

The Achaians, says Polybius,[2] abhorred all manner of double-dealing in war, not reputing it a victory unless where the courage of the enemy was fairly subdued :—

[1] "Stratagem or valour, who questions in an enemy?"—*Æneid*, ii. 390.

[2] xiii. 1.

"Eam vir sanctus et sapiens scit veram esse victoriam, quæ, salva fide et integra dignitate, parabitur."[1]

Says another :—

"Vosne velit, an me, regnare hera, quidve ferat, fors virtute experiamur."[2]

In the kingdom of Ternate, amongst those nations which we so broadly call barbarians, they have a custom never to commence war, till it be first proclaimed; adding withal an ample declaration of what means they have to do it with, with what and how many men, what ammunitions, and what, both offensive and defensive, arms; but also, that being done, if their enemies do not yield and come to an agreement, they conceive it lawful to employ without reproach in their wars any means which may help them to conquer.

The ancient Florentines were so far from seeking to obtain any advantage over their enemies by surprise, that they always gave them a month's warning before they drew their army into the field, by the continual tolling of a bell they called Martinella.[3]

For what concerns ourselves, who are not so scrupulous in this affair, and who attribute the honour of the war to him who has the profit of it, and who after Lysander[4] say, "Where the lion's skin is too short, we must eke it out with a bit from that of a fox"; the most usual occasions of surprise are derived from this practice, and we hold that there are no moments wherein a chief ought to be more circumspect, and to have his eye so much at

[1] "An honest and prudent man will acknowledge that only to be a true victory which shall be obtained saving his own good faith and dignity."—Florus, i. 12.

[2] "Whether lady fortune be willing that you or I shall govern, let us test by valour."—Ennius, *ap.* Cicero, *De Offic.*, i. 12.

[3] After St. Martin.

[4] Plutarch apud *Vitam Lysandri.*

watch, as those of parleys and treaties of accommodation; and it is, therefore, become a general rule amongst the martial men of these latter times, that a governor of a place never ought, in a time of siege, to go out to parley. It was for this that in our fathers' days the Seigneurs de Montmord and de l'Assigni, defending Mousson[1] against the Count of Nassau, were so highly censured. But yet, as to this, it would be excusable in that governor who, going out, should, notwithstanding, do it in such manner that the safety and advantage should be on his side: as Count Guido di Rangone did at Reggio (if we are to believe Du Bellay, for Guicciardini says it was he himself) when the Seigneur de l'Escut approached to parley, who stepped so little away from his fort, that a disorder happening in the interim of parley, not only Monsieur de l'Escut and his party who were advanced with him, found themselves by much the weaker, insomuch that Alessandro Trivulzio was there slain, but he himself was constrained, as the safest way, to follow the Count, and, relying upon his honour, to secure himself from the danger of the shot within the walls of the town.

Eumenes, being shut up in the city of Nora by Antigonus, and by him importuned to come out to speak with him, as he sent him word it was fit he should to a greater man than himself, and one who had now an advantage over him, returned this noble answer. "Tell him," said he, "that I shall never think any man greater than myself whilst I have my sword in my hand," and would not consent to come out to him till first, according to his own demand, Antigonus had delivered him his own nephew Ptolomeus in hostage.[2]

[1] Pont-à-Mousson, Lorraine. [2] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, c. 5.

And yet some have done very well in going out in person to parley, on the word of the assailant: witness Henry de Vaux, a cavalier of Champagne, who being besieged by the English in the Castle of Commercy, and Bartholomew de Brunes, who commanded at the Leaguer, having so sapped the greatest part of the castle without, that nothing remained but setting fire to the props to bury the besieged under the ruins, he requested the said Henry to come out to speak with him for his own good, which he did with three more in company; and, his ruin being made apparent to him, he conceived himself singularly obliged to his enemy, to whose discretion he and his garrison surrendered themselves; and fire being presently applied to the mine, the props no sooner began to fail, but the castle was immediately blown up from its foundations, no one stone being left upon another.

I could, and do, with great facility, rely upon the faith of another; but I should very unwillingly do it in such a case, as it should thereby be judged that it was rather an effect of my despair and want of courage than voluntarily and out of confidence and security in the faith of him with whom I had to do.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOUR OF PARLEY DANGEROUS

I saw, notwithstanding, lately in my neighbourhood of Mussidan, that those who were driven out thence by our army, and others of their party, highly complained of treachery, for that during a treaty of accommodation, and in the very interim that their deputies were treating, they were surprised and cut to pieces: a thing that, peradventure, in another

age, might have had some colour of foul play; but, as I have just said, the practice of arms in these days is quite another thing, and there is now no confidence in an enemy excusable till the treaty is finally sealed; and even then the conqueror has enough to do to keep his word: so hazardous a thing it is to entrust the observation of the faith a man has engaged to a town that surrenders upon easy and favourable conditions, to the licence of a victorious army, and to give the soldier free entrance into it in the heat of blood.

Lucius Æmilius Regillus, the Roman prætor, having lost his time in attempting to take the city of Phocæa by force, by reason of the singular valour wherewith the inhabitants defended themselves, conditioned, at last, to receive them as friends to the people of Rome, and to enter the town, as into a confederate city, without any manner of hostility, of which he gave them all assurance; but having, for the greater pomp, brought his whole army in with him, it was no more in his power, with all the endeavour he could use, to restrain his people: so that, avarice and revenge trampling under foot both his authority and all military discipline, he there saw a considerable part of the city sacked and ruined before his face.

Cleomenes was wont to say, "that what mischief soever a man could do his enemy in time of war was above justice, and nothing accountable to it in the sight of gods and men." And so, having concluded a truce with those of Argos for seven days, the third night after he fell upon them when they were all buried in sleep, and put them to the sword, alleging that there had no nights been mentioned in the truce; but the gods punished this subtle perfidy.

In a time of parley also, and while the citizens were relying upon their safety warrant, the city of

Casilinum was taken by surprise, and that even in the age of the justest captains and the most perfect Roman military discipline; for it is not said that it is not lawful for us, in time and place, to make advantage of our enemies' want of understanding, as well as their want of courage.

And, doubtless, war has naturally many privileges that appear reasonable even to the prejudice of reason. And therefore here the rule fails:—

"Neminem id agere ut ex alterius prædetur inscitia."[1]

But I am astonished at the great liberty allowed by Xenophon in such cases, and that both by precept and by the example of several exploits of his complete emperor; an author of very great authority, I confess, in those affairs, as being in his own person both a great captain and a philosopher of the first form of Socrates' disciples; and yet I cannot consent to such a measure of licence as he dispenses in all things and places.

Monsieur d'Aubigny, besieging Capua, and after having directed a furious battery against it, Signor Fabricio Colonna, governor of the town, having from a bastion begun to parley, and his soldiers in the meantime being a little more remiss in their guard, our people entered the place at unawares, and put them all to the sword. And of later memory, at Yvoy, Signor Juliano Romero having played that part of a novice to go out to parley with the Constable, at his return found his place taken. But, that we might not scape scot-free, the Marquess of Pescara having laid siege to Genoa, where Duke Ottaviano Fregoso commanded under our protection, and the articles betwixt them being

[1] "No one should so act that he preys upon another's ignorance."—Cicero, *De Offic.*, iii. 17.

so far advanced that it was looked upon as a done thing, and upon the point to be concluded, the Spaniards in the meantime having slipped in, made use of this treachery as an absolute victory. And since, at Ligny, in Barrois, where the Count de Brienne commanded, the emperor having in his own person beleaguered that place, and Bertheville, the said Count's lieutenant, going out to parley, whilst he was capitulating the town was taken.

> "Fu il vincer sempre mai laudabil cosa,
> Vincasi o per fortuna, o per ingegno,"[1]

say they. But the philosopher Chrysippus was of another opinion, wherein I also concur; for he was used to say that those who run a race ought to employ all the force they have in what they are about, and to run as fast as they can; but that it is by no means fair in them to lay any hand upon their adversary to stop him, nor to set a leg before him to throw him down.[2] And yet more generous was the answer of that great Alexander to Polypercon, who was persuading him to take the advantage of the night's obscurity to fall upon Darius. "By no means," said he; "it is not for such a man as I am to steal a victory":—

> "Malo me fortunæ pœniteat, quam victoriæ pudeat."[3]

> "Atque idem fugientem haud est dignatus Oroden
> Sternere, nec jactâ cæcum dare cuspide vulnus:
> Obvius, adversoque occurrit, seque viro vir
> Contulit, haud furto melior, sed fortibus armis."[4]

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[1] "Victory is ever worthy of praise, whether obtained by valour or by wisdom."—Ariosto, xv. 1.

[2] Cicero, *De Offic.*, iii. 10.

[3] "I had rather repent of ill-fortune than be ashamed of victory."—Quint. Curt., iv. 13.

[4] "And the same deigned not to throw down Orodes as he fled, or with the darted spear to give him a wound unseen; face to face he met him, and encountered man to man; superior, not in stratagem, but in valiant arms."—*Æneid*, x. 732.

CHAPTER VII

THAT THE INTENTION IS JUDGE OF OUR ACTIONS

'Tis a saying, "That death discharges us of all our obligations." I know some who have taken it in another sense. Henry VII., King of England, articled with Don Philip, son to Maximilian the emperor, or (to place him more honourably) father to the Emperor Charles V., that the said Philip should deliver up the Duke of Suffolk of the White Rose, his enemy, who was fled into the Low Countries, into his hands; which Philip accordingly did, but upon condition, nevertheless, that Henry should attempt nothing against the life of the said Duke; but coming to die, the king in his last will commanded his son to put him to death immediately after his decease. And lately, in the tragedy that the Duke of Alva presented to us in the persons of the Counts Horn and Egmont at Brussels,[1] there were very remarkable passages, and one amongst the rest, that Count Egmont (upon the security of whose word and faith Count Horn had come and surrendered himself to the Duke of Alva) earnestly entreated that he might first mount the scaffold, to the end that death might disengage him from the obligation he had passed to the other. In which case, methinks, death did not acquit the former of his promise, and that the second was discharged from it without dying. We cannot be bound beyond what we are able to perform, by reason that effect and performance are not at all in our power, and that, indeed, we are masters of nothing but the will, in which, by necessity, all the rules

[1] Decapitated 4th June 1568.

and whole duty of mankind are founded and established: therefore Count Egmont, conceiving his soul and will indebted to his promise, although he had not the power to make it good, had doubtless been absolved of his duty, even though he had outlived the other; but the King of England wilfully and premeditately breaking his faith, was no more to be excused for deferring the execution of his infidelity till after his death than the mason in Herodotus, who having inviolably, during the time of his life, kept the secret of the treasure of the King of Egypt, his master, at his death discovered it to his children.[1]

I have taken notice of several in my time, who, convicted by their consciences of unjustly detaining the goods of another, have endeavoured to make amends by their will, and after their decease; but they had as good do nothing, as either in taking so much time in so pressing an affair, or in going about to remedy a wrong with so little dissatisfaction or injury to themselves. They owe, over and above, something of their own; and by how much their payment is more strict and incommodious to themselves, by so much is their restitution more just and meritorious. Penitency requires penalty; but they yet do worse than these, who reserve the declaration of a mortal animosity against their neighbour to the last gasp, having concealed it during their life; wherein they manifest little regard of their own honour, irritating the party offended in their memory; and less to their conscience, not having the power, even out of respect to death itself, to make their malice die with them, but extending the life of their hatred even beyond their own. Unjust judges, who defer

[1] Herod., ii. 121.

judgment to a time wherein they can have no knowledge of the cause! For my part, I shall take care, if I can, that my death discover nothing that my life has not first and openly declared.

CHAPTER VIII

OF IDLENESS

As we see some grounds that have long lain idle and untilled, when grown rich and fertile by rest, to abound with and spend their virtue in the product of innumerable sorts of weeds and wild herbs that are unprofitable, and that to make them perform their true office, we are to cultivate and prepare them for such seeds as are proper for our service; and as we see women that, without knowledge of man, do sometimes of themselves bring forth inanimate and formless lumps of flesh, but that to cause a natural and perfect generation they are to be husbanded with another kind of seed: even so it is with minds, which if not applied to some certain study that may fix and restrain them, run into a thousand extravagances, eternally roving here and there in the vague expanse of the imagination :—

> "Sicut aquæ tremulum labris ubi lumen ahenis,
> Sole repercussum, aut radiantis imagine lunæ,
> Omnia pervolitat latè loca; jamque sub auras
> Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti"[1]

—in which wild agitation there is no folly, nor idle fancy they do not light upon :—

[1] "As when in brazen vats of water the trembling beams of light, reflected from the sun, or from the image of the radiant moon, swiftly float over every place around, and now are darted up on high, and strike the ceilings of the upmost roof."—*Æneid*, viii. 22.

"Velut ægri somnia, vanæ
Finguntur species."[1]

The soul that has no established aim loses itself, for, as it is said :—

"Quisquis ubique habitat, Maxime, nusquam habitat."[2]

When I lately retired to my own house, with a resolution, as much as possibly I could, to avoid all manner of concern in affairs, and to spend in privacy and repose the little remainder of time I have to live, I fancied I could not more oblige my mind than to suffer it at full leisure to entertain and divert itself, which I now hoped it might henceforth do, as being by time become more settled and mature ; but I find :—

"Variam semper dant otia mentem,"[3]

that, quite contrary, it is like a horse that has broke from his rider, who voluntarily runs into a much more violent career than any horseman would put him to, and creates me so many chimæras and fantastic monsters, one upon another, without order or design, that, the better at leisure to contemplate their strangeness and absurdity, I have begun to commit them to writing, hoping in time to make it ashamed of itself.

CHAPTER IX

OF LIARS

THERE is not a man living whom it would so little become to speak from memory as myself, for I

[1] "As a sick man's dreams, vain phantasms are imagined."—Hor., *De Arte Poeticâ*, 7.
[2] "He who lives everywhere, Maximus, lives nowhere."—Martial, vii. 73.
[3] "Leisure ever operates differently on minds."—Lucan, iv. 704.

have scarcely any at all, and do not think that the world has another so marvellously treacherous as mine. My other faculties are all sufficiently ordinary and mean; but in this I think myself very rare and singular, and deserving to be thought famous. Besides the natural inconvenience I suffer by it (for, certes, the necessary use of memory considered, Plato had reason when he called it a great and powerful goddess), in my country, when they would say a man has no sense, they say, such an one has no memory; and when I complain of the defect of mine, they do not believe me, and reprove me, as though I accused myself for a fool: not discerning the difference betwixt memory and understanding, which is to make matters still worse for me. But they do me wrong; for experience, rather, daily shows us, on the contrary, that a strong memory is commonly coupled with infirm judgment. They do, me, moreover (who am so perfect in nothing as in friendship), a great wrong in this, that they make the same words which accuse my infirmity, represent me for an ungrateful person; they bring my affections into question upon the account of my memory, and from a natural imperfection, make out a defect of conscience. "He has forgot," says one, "this request, or that promise; he no more remembers his friends; he has forgot to say or do, or conceal such and such a thing, for my sake." And, truly, I am apt enough to forget many things, but to neglect anything my friend has given me in charge, I never do it. And it should be enough, methinks, that I feel the misery and inconvenience of it, without branding me with malice, a vice so contrary to my humour.

However, I derive these comforts from my infirmity: first, that it is an evil from which

principally I have found reason to correct a worse, that would easily enough have grown upon me, namely, ambition; the defect being intolerable in those who take upon them public affairs. That, as several like examples in the progress of nature demonstrate to us, she has fortified me in my other faculties proportionably as she has left me unfurnished in this; I should otherwise have been apt implicitly to have reposed my mind and judgment upon the bare report of other men, without ever setting them to work upon their own force, had the inventions and opinions of others been ever present with me by the benefit of memory. That by this means I am not so talkative, for the magazine of the memory is ever better furnished with matter than that of the invention. Had mine been faithful to me, I had ere this deafened all my friends with my babble, the subjects themselves arousing and stirring up the little faculty I have of handling and employing them, heating and distending my discourse, which were a pity: as I have observed in several of my intimate friends, who, as their memories supply them with an entire and full view of things, begin their narrative so far back, and crowd it with so many impertinent circumstances, that though the story be good in itself, they make a shift to spoil it; and if otherwise, you are either to curse the strength of their memory or the weakness of their judgment: and it is a hard thing to close up a discourse, and to cut it short, when you have once started; there is nothing wherein the force of a horse is so much seen as in a round and sudden stop. I see even those who are pertinent enough, who would, but cannot stop short in their career; for whilst they are seeking out a handsome period to conclude with, they go

on at random, straggling about upon impertinent trivialities, as men staggering upon weak legs. But, above all, old men who retain the memory of things past, and forget how often they have told them, are dangerous company; and I have known stories from the mouth of a man of very great quality, otherwise very pleasant in themselves, become very wearisome by being repeated a hundred times over and over again to the same people.

Secondly, that, by this means, I the less remember the injuries I have received; insomuch that, as the ancient said,[1] I should have a register of injuries, or a prompter, as Darius, who, that he might not forget the offence he had received from those of Athens, so oft as he sat down to dinner, ordered one of his pages three times to repeat in his ear, "Sir, remember the Athenians"[2]; and then, again, the places which I revisit, and the books I read over again, still smile upon me with a fresh novelty.

It is not without good reason said "that he who has not a good memory should never take upon him the trade of lying." I know very well that the grammarians[3] distinguish betwixt an *untruth* and a *lie*, and say that to tell an *untruth* is to tell a thing that is false, but that we ourselves believe to be true; and that the definition of the word *to lie* in Latin, from which our French is taken, is to tell a thing which we know in our conscience to be untrue; and it is of this last sort of liars only that I now speak. Now, these do either wholly contrive and invent the untruths they utter, or so alter and

[1] Cicero, *Pro Q. Ligario*, c. 12. [2] Herod., v. 105.
[3] Publius Nigidius apud Aulum Gellium, xi. 11; Nonius Marcellus, v. 80.

disguise a true story that it ends in a lie. When they disguise and often alter the same story, according to their own fancy, 'tis very hard for them, at one time or another, to escape being trapped, by reason that the real truth of the thing, having first taken possession of the memory, and being there lodged and impressed by the medium of knowledge and science, it will be difficult that it should not represent itself to the imagination, and shoulder out falsehood, which cannot there have so sure and settled footing as the other; and the circumstances of the first true knowledge evermore running in their minds, will be apt to make them forget those that are illegitimate, and only forged by their own fancy. In what they wholly invent, forasmuch as there is no contrary impression to jostle their invention, there seems to be less danger of tripping; and yet even this also, by reason it is a vain body, and without any hold, is very apt to escape the memory, if it be not well assured. Of which I have had very pleasant experience, at the expense of such as profess only to form and accommodate their speech to the affair they have in hand, or to the humour of the great folks to whom they are speaking; for the circumstances to which these men stick not to enslave their faith and conscience being subject to several changes, their language must vary accordingly: whence it happens that of the same thing they tell one man that it is this, and another that it is that, giving it several colours; which men, if they once come to confer notes, and find out the cheat, what becomes of this fine art? To which may be added, that they must of necessity very often ridiculously trap themselves; for what memory can be sufficient to retain so many different shapes as they have forged upon one and the same

subject? I have known many in my time very ambitious of the repute of this fine wit; but they do not see that if they have the reputation of it, the effect can no longer be.

In plain truth, lying is an accursed vice. We are not men, nor have other tie upon one another, but by our word. If we did but discover the horror and gravity of it, we should pursue it with fire and sword, and more justly than other crimes. I see that parents commonly, and with indiscretion enough, correct their children for little innocent faults, and torment them for wanton tricks, that have neither impression nor consequence; whereas, in my opinion, lying only, and, which is of something a lower form, obstinacy, are the faults which are to be severely whipped out of them, both in their infancy and in their progress, otherwise they grow up and increase with them; and after a tongue has once got the knack of lying, 'tis not to be imagined how impossible it is to reclaim it: whence it comes to pass that we see some, who are otherwise very honest men, so subject and enslaved to this vice. I have an honest lad to my tailor, whom I never knew guilty of one truth, no, not when it had been to his advantage. If *falsehood* had, like *truth*, but one face only, we should be upon better terms; for we should then take for certain the contrary to what the liar says: but the reverse of *truth* has a hundred thousand forms, and a field indefinite, without bound or limit. The Pythagoreans make *good* to be certain and finite, and *evil*, infinite and uncertain. There are a thousand ways to miss the white, there is only one to hit it. For my own part, I have this vice in so great horror, that I am not sure I could prevail with my conscience to secure myself from the

most manifest and extreme danger by an impudent and solemn lie. An ancient father says "that a dog we know is better company than a man whose language we do not understand."

"Ut externus alieno pene non sit hominis vice."[1]

And how much less sociable is false speaking than silence?

King Francis I. vaunted that he had by this means turned round[2] Francesco Taverna, ambassador of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, a man very famous for his science in talking in those days. This gentleman had been sent to excuse his master to his Majesty about a thing of very great consequence, which was this: the King, still to maintain some intelligence with Italy, out of which he had lately been driven, and particularly with the duchy of Milan, had thought it convenient to have a gentleman on his behalf to be with that Duke: an ambassador in effect, but in outward appearance a private person who pretended to reside there upon his own particular affairs; for the Duke, much more depending upon the Emperor, especially at a time when he was in a treaty of marriage with his niece, daughter to the King of Denmark, who is now dowager of Lorraine, could not manifest any practice and conference with us without his great interest. For this commission one Merveille, a Milanese gentleman,[3] and an equerry to the King, being thought very fit, was accordingly despatched thither with private credentials, and instructions as ambassador, and with other letters of recommendation to the Duke about his own private concerns,

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, vii. 1.

[2] "Mis au rouet."—*Orig. Fr.*

[3] Perhaps a Frenchman whom Francis I. had taken with him to Italy.

the better to mask and colour the business; and was so long in that court, that the Emperor at last had some inkling of his real employment there; which was the occasion of what followed after, as we suppose; which was, that under pretence of some murder, his trial was in two days despatched, and his head in the night struck off in prison. Messire Francesco being come, and prepared with a long counterfeit history of the affair (for the King had applied himself to all the princes of Christendom, as well as to the Duke himself, to demand satisfaction), had his audience at the morning council; where, after he had for the support of his cause laid open several plausible justifications of the fact, that his master had never looked upon this Merveille for other than a private gentleman and his own subject, who was there only in order to his own business, neither had he ever lived under any other aspect; absolutely disowning that he had ever heard he was one of the King's household or that his Majesty so much as knew him, so far was he from taking him for an ambassador: the King, in his turn, pressing him with several objections and demands, and challenging him on all sides, tripped him up at last by asking, why, then, the execution was performed by night, and as it were by stealth? At which the poor confounded ambassador, the more handsomely to disengage himself, made answer, that the Duke would have been very loth, out of respect to his Majesty, that such an execution should have been performed by day. Any one may guess if he was not well rated when he came home, for having so grossly tripped in the presence of a prince of so delicate a nostril as King Francis.

Pope Julius II. having sent an ambassador to the King of England to animate him against King

Francis, the ambassador having had his audience, and the King, before he would give an answer, insisting upon the difficulties he should find in setting on foot so great a preparation as would be necessary to attack so potent a King, and urging some reasons to that effect, the ambassador very unseasonably replied that he had also himself considered the same difficulties, and had represented them to the Pope. From which saying of his, so directly opposite to the thing propounded and the business he came about, which was immediately to incite him to war, the King of England first derived the argument (which he afterward found to be true), that this ambassador, in his own mind, was on the side of the French; of which having advertised his master, his estate at his return home was confiscated, and he himself very narrowly escaped the loss of his life.[1]

CHAPTER X

OF QUICK OR SLOW SPEECH

"Onc ne furent à touts toutes graces données."[2]

So we see in the gift of eloquence, wherein some have such a facility and promptness, and that which we call a *present* wit so easy, that they are ever ready upon all occasions, and never to be surprised; and others more heavy and slow, never venture to utter anything but what they have long premeditated, and taken great care and pains to fit and prepare.

Now, as we teach young ladies those sports and

[1] Erasmi *Op.* (1703), iv. col. 684.

[2] "All graces were never yet given to any one man."—A verse in one of La Brebis' Sonnets.

exercises which are most proper to set out the grace and beauty of those parts wherein their chiefest ornament and perfection lie, so it should be in these two advantages of eloquence, to which the lawyers and preachers of our age seem principally to pretend. If I were worthy to advise, the slow speaker, methinks, should be more proper for the pulpit, and the other for the bar: and that because the employment of the first does naturally allow him all the leisure he can desire to prepare himself, and besides, his career is performed in an even and unintermitted line, without stop or interruption; whereas the pleader's business and interest compels him to enter the lists upon all occasions, and the unexpected objections and replies of his adverse party jostle him out of his course, and put him, upon the instant, to pump for new and extempore answers and defences. Yet, at the interview betwixt Pope Clement and King Francis at Marseilles, it happened, quite contrary, that Monsieur Poyet, a man bred up all his life at the bar, and in the highest repute for eloquence, having the charge of making the harangue to the Pope committed to him, and having so long meditated on it beforehand, as, so they said, to have brought it ready made along with him from Paris; the very day it was to have been pronounced, the Pope, fearing something might be said that might give offence to the other princes' ambassadors who were there attending on him, sent to acquaint the King with the argument which he conceived most suiting to the time and place, but, by chance, quite another thing to that Monsieur de Poyet had taken so much pains about: so that the fine speech he had prepared was of no use, and he was upon the instant to contrive another; which finding himself unable

to do, Cardinal du Bellay was constrained to perform that office. The pleader's part is, doubtless, much harder than that of the preacher; and yet, in my opinion, we see more passable lawyers than preachers, at all events in France. It should seem that the nature of wit is to have its operation prompt and sudden, and that of judgment to have it more deliberate and more slow. But he who remains totally silent, for want of leisure to prepare himself to speak well, and he also whom leisure does no ways benefit to better speaking, are equally unhappy.

'Tis said of Severus Cassius that he spoke best extempore, that he stood more obliged to fortune than to his own diligence; that it was an advantage to him to be interrupted in speaking, and that his adversaries were afraid to nettle him, lest his anger should redouble his eloquence. I know, experimentally, the disposition of nature so impatient of a tedious and elaborate premeditation, that if it do not go frankly and gaily to work, it can perform nothing to purpose. We say of some compositions that they stink of oil and of the lamp, by reason of a certain rough harshness that laborious handling imprints upon those where it has been employed. But besides this, the solicitude of doing well, and a certain striving and contending of a mind too far strained and overbent upon its undertaking, breaks and hinders itself like water, that by force of its own pressing violence and abundance, cannot find a ready issue through the neck of a bottle or a narrow sluice. In this condition of nature, of which I am now speaking, there is this also, that it would not be disordered and stimulated with such passions as the fury of Cassius (for such a motion would be too violent and rude); it would not be jostled, but

solicited; it would be roused and heated by unexpected, sudden, and accidental occasions. If it be left to itself, it flags and languishes; agitation only gives it grace and vigour. I am always worst in my own possession, and when wholly at my own disposition: accident has more title to anything that comes from me than I; occasion, company, and even the very rising and falling of my own voice, extract more from my fancy than I can find, when I sound and employ it by myself. By which means, the things I say are better than those I write, if either were to be preferred, where neither is worth anything. This, also, befalls me, that I do not find myself where I seek myself, and I light upon things more by chance than by any inquisition of my own judgment. I perhaps sometimes hit upon something when I write, that seems quaint and sprightly to me, though it will appear dull and heavy to another.—But let us leave these fine compliments; every one talks thus of himself according to his talent. But when I come to speak, I am already so lost that I know not what I was about to say, and in such cases a stranger often finds it out before me. If I should make erasure so often as this inconvenience befalls me, I should make clean work; occasion will, at some other time, lay it as visible to me as the light, and make me wonder what I should stick at.

CHAPTER XI

OF PROGNOSTICATIONS

For what concerns oracles, it is certain that a good while before the coming of Jesus Christ they had

begun to lose their credit; for we see that Cicero is troubled to find out the cause of their decay, and he has these words:—

"Cur isto modo jam oracula Delphis non eduntur, non modo nostrâ ætate, sed jam diu; ut nihil possit esse contemptius?"[1]

But as to the other prognostics, calculated from the anatomy of beasts at sacrifices (to which purpose Plato does, in part, attribute the natural constitution of the intestines of the beasts themselves), the scraping of poultry, the flight of birds:—

"Aves quasdam . . . rerum augurandarum causâ natas esse putamus."[2]

—claps of thunder, the overflowing of rivers—

"Multa cernunt Aruspices, multa Augures provident, multa oraculis declarantur, multa vaticinationibus, multa somniis, multa portentis"[3]

—and others of the like nature, upon which antiquity founded most of their public and private enterprises, our religion has totally abolished them. And although there yet remain amongst us some practices of divination from the stars, from spirits, from the shapes and complexions of men, from dreams and the like (a notable example of the wild curiosity of our nature to grasp at and anticipate future things, as if we had not enough to do to digest the present):—

[1] "What is the reason that the oracles at Delphi are not now delivered: not merely in this age of ours, but for a long time past, insomuch that nothing is more in contempt?"—Cicero, *De Divin.*, ii. 57.

[2] "We think some sorts of birds are purposely created to serve the purposes of augury."—Cicero, *De Naturâ Deor.*, ii. 64.

[3] The Aruspices discern many things, the Augurs foresee many things, many things are announced by oracles, many by vaticinations, many by dreams, many by portents."—Cicero, *De Naturâ Deor.*, ii. 65.

"Cur hanc tibi, rector Olympi,
Sollicitis visum mortalibus addere curam,
Noscant venturas ut dira per omina clades? . . .
Sit subitum, quodcumque paras; sit cœca futuri
Mens hominum fati, liceat sperare timenti."[1]

"Ne utile quidem est scire quid futurum sit; miserum est enim, nihil proficientem angi,"[2]

yet are they of much less authority now than heretofore. Which makes so much more remarkable the example of Francesco, Marquis of Saluzzo, who being lieutenant to King Francis I. in his ultramontane army, infinitely favoured and esteemed in our court, and obliged to the king's bounty for the marquisate itself, which had been forfeited by his brother; and as to the rest, having no manner of provocation given him to do it, and even his own affection opposing any such disloyalty, suffered himself to be so terrified, as it was confidently reported, with the fine prognostics that were spread abroad everywhere in favour of the Emperor Charles V., and to our disadvantage (especially in Italy, where these foolish prophecies were so far believed, that at Rome great sums of money were ventured out upon return of greater, when the prognostics came to pass, so certain they made themselves of our ruin), that, having often bewailed, to those of his acquaintance who were most intimate with him, the mischiefs that he saw would inevitably fall upon the Crown of France and the friends he had in that court, he revolted and turned to the other side; to his own misfortune, nevertheless,

[1] "Why, ruler of Olympus, hast thou to anxious mortals thought fit to add this care, that they should know by omens future slaughter? . . . Let whatever thou art preparing be sudden. Let the mind of men be blind to fate in store; let it be permitted to the timid to hope."—Lucan, ii. 14.

[2] "It is useless to know what shall come to pass; it is a miserable thing to be tormented to no purpose."—Cicero, *De Naturâ Deor.*, iii. 6.

what constellation soever governed at that time. But he carried himself in this affair like a man agitated by divers passions; for having both towns and forces in his hands, the enemy's army under Antonio de Leyva close by him, and we not at all suspecting his design, it had been in his power to have done more than he did; for we lost no men by this infidelity of his, nor any town, but Fossano only, and that after a long siege and a brave defence.[1]

"Prudens futuri temporis exitum
Caliginosâ nocte premit Deus,
Ridetque, si mortalis ultra
Fas trepidat."[2]

"Ille potens sui
Lætusque deget, cui licet in diem
Dixisse vixi! cras vel atrâ
Nube polum pater occupato,
Vel sole puro."[3]

"Lætus in præsens animus; quod ultra est,
Oderit curare."[4]

And those who take this sentence in a contrary sense interpret it amiss[5]:—

"Ista sic reciprocantur, ut et si divinatio sit, dii sint; et si dii sint, sit divinatio."[6]

Much more wisely Pacuvius:—

[1] In 1536.

[2] "A provident God covers with thick night the outcome of the future, and laughs if a mortal alarms himself without reason."—Hor., *Od.*, iii. 29.

[3] "He will live happy and master of himself who can say from day to day, 'I HAVE LIVED': whether to-morrow our Father shall give us a clouded sky or a clear day."—Hor., *Od.*, iii. 29.

[4] "A mind happy, cheerful in the present state, will take good care not to think of what is beyond it.—*Ibid.*, ii. 25.

[5] "Et ceulx, qui croyent ce mot au contraire, le croyent à tort."—Fr.

[6] "These things are so far reciprocal that if there be divination, there must be deities; and if deities, divination."—Cicero, *De Divin.*, i. 6.

"Nam istis, qui linguam avium intelligunt,
Plusque ex alieno jecore sapiunt, quam ex suo,
Magis audiendum, quam auscultandum, censeo."[1]

The so celebrated art of divination amongst the Tuscans took its beginning thus: A labourer striking deep with his culter into the earth, saw the demigod Tages ascend, with an infantine aspect, but endued with a mature and senile wisdom. Upon the rumour of which, all the people ran to see the sight, by whom his words and science, containing the principles and means to attain to this art, were recorded, and kept for many ages.[2] A birth suitable to its progress; I, for my part, should sooner regulate my affairs by the chance of a die than by such idle and vain dreams. And, indeed, in all republics, a good share of the government has ever been referred to chance. Plato, in the civil regimen that he models according to his own fancy, leaves to it the decision of several things of very great importance, and will, amongst other things, that marriages should be appointed by lot, attributing so great importance to this accidental choice as to ordain that the children begotten in such wedlock be brought up in the country, and those begotten in any other be thrust out as spurious and base; yet so, that if any of those exiles, notwithstanding, should, peradventure, in growing up give any good hope of himself, he might be recalled, as, also, that such as had been retained, should be exiled, in case they gave little expectation of themselves in their early growth.

I see some who study and comment upon their almanacs, and produce them to us as an authority for

[1] "For to those who understand the language of birds, and who rather gain knowledge from the livers of others than their own, I had rather listen than attend."—Cicero, *De Divin.*, i. 57, *ex* Pacuvio.

[2] Cicero, *De Divin.*, ii. 23.

passing events; and, for that matter, it is hardly possible but that these alleged authorities sometimes stumble upon a truth amongst an infinite number of lies:—

"Quis est enim, qui totum diem jaculans non aliquando collineet?"[1]

I think never the better of them for some such accidental hit. There would be more certainty in it if there were a rule and a truth of always lying. Besides, nobody records their flimflams and false prognostics, forasmuch as they are infinite and common; but if they chop upon one truth, that carries a mighty report, as being rare, incredible, and prodigious. So Diogenes, surnamed the Atheist, answered him in Samothrace, who, showing him in the temple the several offerings and stories in painting of those who had escaped shipwreck, said to him, "Look, you who think the gods have no care of human things, what do you say to so many persons preserved from death by their especial favour?" "Why, I say," answered he, "that their pictures are not here who were cast away, who are by much the greater number."[2]

Cicero observes that of all the philosophers who have acknowledged a deity, Xenophanes the Colophonian only has endeavoured to eradicate all manner of divination[3]; which makes it the less a wonder if we have now and then seen some of our princes, sometimes to their own cost, rely too much upon these vanities. I had given anything with my own eyes to see those two great marvels, the book of Joachim the Calabrian abbot, which foretold

[1] "For who shoots all day at butts that does not sometimes hit the white?"—Cicero, *De Divin.*, ii. 59.
[2] Cicero, *De Naturâ Deor.*, i. 37.
[3] Cicero, *De Divin.*, i. 3.

all the future Popes, their names and qualities; and that of the Emperor Leo, which prophesied all the emperors and patriarchs of Greece. This I have been an eyewitness of, that in public confusions, men astonished at their fortune, have abandoned their own reason, superstitiously to seek out in the stars the ancient causes and menaces of the present mishaps, and in my time have been so strangely successful in it, as to make me believe that this being an amusement of sharp and volatile wits, those who have been versed in this knack of unfolding and untying riddles, are capable, in any sort of writing, to find out what they desire. But above all, that which gives them the greatest room to play in, is the obscure, ambiguous, and fantastic gibberish of the prophetic canting, where their authors deliver nothing of clear sense, but shroud all in riddle, to the end that posterity may interpret and apply it according to its own fancy.

The demon of Socrates might, perhaps, be no other but a certain impulsion of the will, which obtruded itself upon him without the advice or consent of his judgment; and in a soul so enlightened as his was, and so prepared by a continual exercise of wisdom and virtue, 'tis to be supposed those inclinations of his, though sudden and undigested, were very important and worthy to be followed. Every one finds in himself some image of such agitations, of a prompt, vehement, and fortuitous opinion; and I may well allow them some authority, who attribute so little to our prudence, and who also myself have had some, weak in reason, but violent in persuasion and dissuasion, which were most frequent with Socrates,[1] by which I have suffered myself to be carried away so fortun-

[1] Plato, in his account of Theages the Pythagorean.

ately, and so much to my own advantage, that they might have been judged to have had something in them of a divine inspiration.

CHAPTER XII

OF CONSTANCY

THE law of resolution and constancy does not imply that we ought not, as much as in us lies, to decline and secure ourselves from the mischiefs and inconveniences that threaten us; nor, consequently, that we shall not fear lest they should surprise us: on the contrary, all decent and honest ways and means of securing ourselves from harms, are not only permitted, but, moreover, commendable, and the business of constancy chiefly is, bravely to stand to, and stoutly to suffer those inconveniences which are not possibly to be avoided. So that there is no supple motion of body, nor any movement in the handling of arms, how irregular or ungraceful soever, that we need condemn, if they serve to protect us from the blow that is made against us.

Several very warlike nations have made use of a retreating and flying way of fight as a thing of singular advantage, and, by so doing, have made their backs more dangerous to their enemies than their faces. Of which kind of fighting the Turks still retain something in their practice of arms; and Socrates, in Plato, laughs at Laches, who had defined fortitude to be a standing firm in the ranks against the enemy. "What!" says he, "would it, then, be a reputed cowardice to overcome them by giving ground?" urging, at the same time, the authority of Homer, who commends in Æneas the

science of flight. And whereas Laches, considering better o' it, admits the practice as to the Scythians, and, in general, all cavalry whatever, he again attacks him with the example of the Lacedæmonian foot—a nation of all other the most obstinate in maintaining their ground—who, in the battle of Platæa, not being able to break into the Persian phalanx, bethought themselves to disperse and retire, that by the enemy supposing they fled, they might break and disunite that vast body of men in the pursuit, and by that stratagem obtained the victory.

As for the Scythians, 'tis said of them, that when Darius went his expedition to subdue them, he sent, by a herald, highly to reproach their king, that he always retired before him and declined a battle; to which Idanthyrses,[1] for that was his name, returned answer, that it was not for fear of him, or of any man living, that he did so, but that it was the way of marching in practice with his nation, who had neither tilled fields, cities, nor houses to defend, or to fear the enemy should make any advantage of: but that if he had such a stomach to fight, let him but come to view their ancient places of sepulture, and there he should have his fill.

Nevertheless, as to cannon-shot, when a body of men are drawn up in the face of a train of artillery, as the occasion of war often requires, it is unhandsome to quit their post to avoid the danger, forasmuch as by reason of its violence and swiftness we account it inevitable; and many a one, by ducking, stepping aside, and such other motions of fear, has been, at all events, sufficiently laughed at by his companions. And yet, in the expedition that the Emperor Charles V. made against us into Provence,

[1] Herod., iv. 127.

the Marquis de Guast going to reconnoitre the city of Arles, and advancing out of the cover of a windmill, under favour of which he had made his approach, was perceived by the Seigneurs de Bonneval and the Seneschal of Agenois, who were walking upon the *théâtre aux arènes*[1]; who having shown him to the Sieur de Villiers, commissary of the artillery, he pointed a culverin so admirably well, and levelled it so exactly right against him, that had not the Marquis, seeing fire given to it, slipped aside, it was certainly concluded the shot had taken him full in the body. And, in like manner, some years before, Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, and father to the queen-mother,[2] laying siege to Mondolfo, a place in the territories of the Vicariat in Italy, seeing the cannoneer give fire to a piece that pointed directly against him, it was well for him that he ducked, for otherwise the shot, that only razed the top of his head, had doubtless hit him full in the breast. To say truth, I do not think that these evasions are performed upon the account of judgment; for how can any man living judge of high or low aim on so sudden an occasion? And it is much more easy to believe that fortune favoured their apprehension, and that it might be as well at another time to make them face the danger, as to seek to avoid it. For my own part, I confess I cannot forbear starting when the rattle of a harquebuse thunders in my ears on a sudden, and in a place where I am not to expect it, which I have also observed in others, braver fellows than I.

Neither do the Stoics pretend that the soul of their philosopher need be proof against the first

[1] A theatre where public shows of riding, fencing, &c., were exhibited.
[2] Catherine de' Medici, mother of Henry III.

visions and fantasies that surprise him; but, as to a natural subjection, consent that he should tremble at the terrible noise of thunder, or the sudden clatter of some falling ruin, and be affrighted even to paleness and convulsion; and so in other passions, provided his judgment remain sound and entire, and that the seat of his reason suffer no concussion nor alteration, and that he yield no consent to his fright and discomposure. To him who is not a philosopher, a fright is the same thing in the first part of it, but quite another thing in the second; for the impression of passions does not remain superficially in him, but penetrates farther, even to the very seat of reason, infecting and corrupting it, so that he judges according to his fear, and conforms his behaviour to it.[1] In this verse you may see the true state of the wise Stoic learnedly and plainly expressed:—

"Mens immota manet; lachrymæ volvuntur inanes."[2]

The Peripatetic sage does not exempt himself totally from perturbations of mind, but he moderates them.

CHAPTER XIII

CEREMONY OF THE INTERVIEW OF KINGS

THERE is no subject so frivolous that does not merit a place in this rhapsody. According to our common rule of civility, it would be a notable affront to an equal, and much more to a superior, to fail of being at home when he has given you notice he will come to visit you. Nay, Queen

[1] These reflections are taken from Aulus Gellius, xix. 1, who in his turn borrowed them from the account given by Arrian of the lost Fifth Book of the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus.

[2] "The mind remains unmoved; vain tears are shed."—Virgil, *Æneid*, iv. 449.

Margaret of Navarre[1] further adds, that it would be a rudeness in a gentleman to go out, as we so often do, to meet any that is coming to see him, let him be of what high condition soever; and that it is more respectful and more civil to stay at home to receive him, if only upon the account of missing him by the way, and that it is enough to receive him at the door, and to wait upon him. For my part, who as much as I can endeavour to reduce the ceremonies of my house, I very often forget both the one and the other of these vain offices. If, peradventure, some one may take offence at this, I can't help it; it is much better to offend him once than myself every day, for it would be a perpetual slavery. To what end do we avoid the servile attendance of courts, if we bring the same trouble home to our own private houses? It is also a common rule in all assemblies, that those of less quality are to be first upon the place, by reason that it is more due to the better sort to make others wait and expect them.

Nevertheless, at the interview betwixt Pope Clement and King Francis at Marseilles,[2] the King, after he had taken order for the necessary preparations for his reception and entertainment, withdrew out of the town, and gave the Pope two or three days' respite for his entry, and to repose and refresh himself, before he came to him. And in like manner, at the assignation of the Pope and the Emperor,[3] at Bologna, the Emperor gave the Pope opportunity to come thither first, and came himself after; for which the reason given was this, that at all the interviews of such princes, the greater ought to be first at the appointed place,

[1] Marguerite de Valois, authoress of the *Heptameron*.
[2] In 1533. [3] Charles V. in 1532.

especially before the other in whose territories the interview is appointed to be, intimating thereby a kind of deference to the other, it appearing proper for the less to seek out and to apply themselves to the greater, and not the greater to them.

Not every country only, but every city and every society has its particular forms of civility. There was care enough to this taken in my education, and I have lived in good company enough to know the formalities of our own nation, and am able to give lessons in it. I love to follow them, but not to be so servilely tied to their observation that my whole life should be enslaved to ceremonies, of which there are some so troublesome that, provided a man omits them out of discretion, and not for want of breeding, it will be every whit as handsome. I have seen some people rude, by being over-civil and troublesome in their courtesy.

Still, these excesses excepted, the knowledge of courtesy and good manners is a very necessary study. It is, like grace and beauty, that which begets liking and an inclination to love one another at the first sight, and in the very beginning of acquaintance; and, consequently, that which first opens the door and intromits us to instruct ourselves by the example of others, and to give examples ourselves, if we have any worth taking notice of and communicating.

CHAPTER XIV

MEN ARE PUNISHED FOR BEING OBSTINATE IN THE DEFENCE OF A FORT WITHOUT REASON

Valour has its bounds as well as other virtues, which, once transgressed, the next step is into the

territories of vice; so that by having too large a proportion of this heroic virtue, unless a man be very perfect in its limits, which upon the confines are very hard to discern, he may very easily unawares run into temerity, obstinacy, and folly. From this consideration it is that we have derived the custom, in times of war, to punish, even with death, those who are obstinate to defend a place that by the rules of war is not tenable; otherwise men would be so confident upon the hope of impunity, that not a henroost but would resist and seek to stop an army.

Monsieur the Constable de Montmorenci, having at the siege of Pavia been ordered to pass the Ticino, and to take up his quarters in the Borgo S. Antonio, being hindered by a tower at the end of the bridge, which was so obstinate as to endure a battery, hanged every man he found within it for their labour. And again, accompanying the Dauphin in his expedition beyond the Alps, and taking the Castle of Villano by assault, and all within it being put to the sword by the fury of the soldiers, the governor and his ensign only excepted, he caused them both to be trussed up for the same reason; as also did the Captain Martin du Bellay, then governor of Turin, with the governor of San Buono, in the same country, all his people having been cut to pieces at the taking of the place.

But forasmuch as the strength or weakness of a fortress is always measured by the estimate and counterpoise of the forces that attack it—for a man might reasonably enough despise two culverins, that would be a madman to abide a battery of thirty pieces of cannon—where also the greatness of the prince who is master of the field, his reputation, and the respect that is due unto him, are

also put into the balance, there is danger that the balance be pressed too much in that direction. And it may happen that a man is possessed with so great an opinion of himself and his power, that thinking it unreasonable any place should dare to shut its gates against him, he puts all to the sword where he meets with any opposition, whilst his fortune continues; as is plain in the fierce and arrogant forms of summoning towns and denouncing war, savouring so much of barbarian pride and insolence, in use amongst the Oriental princes, and which their successors to this day do yet retain and practise. And in that part of the world where the Portuguese subdued the Indians, they found some states where it was a universal and inviolable law amongst them that every enemy overcome by the king in person, or by his lieutenant, was out of composition, both of ransom and mercy.

So above all a man should take heed, if he can, of falling into the hands of a judge who is an enemy and victorious.

CHAPTER XV

OF THE PUNISHMENT OF COWARDICE

I once heard of a prince, and a great captain, having a narration given him as he sat at table of the proceeding against Monsieur de Vervins, who was sentenced to death for having surrendered Boulogne to the English,[1] openly maintaining that a soldier could not justly be put to death for want of courage. And, in truth, 'tis reason that a man should make a great difference betwixt faults that

[1] To Henry VIII. in 1544.

merely proceed from infirmity, and those that are visibly the effects of treachery and malice: for, in the last, we act against the rules of reason that nature has imprinted in us; whereas, in the former, it seems as if we might produce the same nature, who left us in such a state of imperfection and weakness of courage, for our justification. Insomuch that many have thought we are not fairly questionable for anything but what we commit against our conscience; and it is partly upon this rule that those ground their opinion who disapprove of capital and sanguinary punishments inflicted upon heretics and misbelievers; and theirs also who hold that an advocate or a judge is not accountable for having from mere ignorance failed in his administration.

But as to cowardice, it is certain that the most usual way of chastising it is by ignominy and disgrace; and it is supposed that this practice was first brought into use by the legislator Charondas[1]; and that, before his time, the laws of Greece punished those with death who fled from a battle; whereas he ordained only that they should be for three days exposed in the public place, dressed in woman's attire, hoping yet for some service from them, having awakened their courage by this open shame: "Suffundere malis hominis sanguinem, quam effundere."[2] It appears also that the Roman laws did anciently punish those with death who had run away; for Ammianus Marcellinus says that the Emperor Julian commanded ten of his soldiers, who had turned their backs in

[1] Of Catana. He flourished in the fifth century B.C., and enjoyed an extensive reputation as a legist.

[2] "Rather bring the blood into a man's cheek than let it out of his body."—Tertullian in his *Apologetics*.

an encounter against the Parthians, to be first degraded, and afterward put to death, according, says he, to the ancient laws,[1] and yet elsewhere for the like offence he only condemned others to remain amongst the prisoners under the baggage ensign. The severe punishment the people of Rome inflicted upon those who fled from the battle of Cannæ, and those who ran away with Cneius Fulvius at his defeat, did not extend to death. And yet, methinks, 'tis to be feared, lest disgrace should make such delinquents desperate, and not only faint friends, but enemies.

Of late memory,[2] the Seigneur de Frauget, lieutenant to the Mareschal de Chatillon's company, having by the Mareschal de Chabannes been put in government of Fuenterrabia in the place of Monsieur de Lude, and having surrendered it to the Spaniard, he was for that condemned to be degraded from all nobility, and both himself and his posterity declared ignoble, taxable, and for ever incapable of bearing arms, which severe sentence was afterwards accordingly executed at Lyons.[3] And, since that, all the gentlemen who were in Guise when the Count of Nassau entered into it, underwent the same punishment, as several others have done since for the like offence. Notwithstanding, in case of such a manifest ignorance or cowardice as exceeds all ordinary example, 'tis but reason to take it for a sufficient proof of treachery and malice, and for such to be punished.

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiv. 4; xxv. 1.
[2] In 1523. [3] In 1536.

CHAPTER XVI

A TRAIT OF SOME AMBASSADORS

I OBSERVE in my travels this custom, ever to learn something from the information of those with whom I confer (which is the best school of all others), and to put my company upon those subjects they are the best able to speak of :—

> "Basti al nocchiero ragionar de' venti,
> Al bifolco dei tori ; et le sue piaghe
> Conti 'l guerrier ; conti 'l pastor gli armenti."[1]

For it often falls out that, on the contrary, every one will rather choose to be prating of another man's province than his own, thinking it so much new reputation acquired ; witness the jeer Archidamus put upon Periander, "that he had quitted the glory of being an excellent physician to gain the repute of a very bad poet.[2] And do but observe how large and ample Cæsar is to make us understand his inventions of building bridges and contriving engines of war,[3] and how succinct and reserved in comparison, where he speaks of the offices of his profession, his own valour, and military conduct. His exploits sufficiently prove him a great captain, and that he knew well enough ; but he would be thought an excellent engineer to boot ; a quality something different, and not necessary to be expected in him. Old Dionysius was a very great captain, as it befitted his fortune he should be ; but he took

[1] "Let the sailor content himself with talking of the winds ; the cowherd of his oxen ; the soldier of his wounds ; the shepherd of his flocks."—An Italian translation of Propertius, ii. 1, 43.

[2] Plutarch, Apoth. of the Lacedæmonians, *in voce* Archidamus.

[3] De Bello Gall., iv. 17.

very great pains to get a particular reputation by poetry, and yet he was never cut out for a poet.[1] A man of the legal profession being not long since brought to see a study furnished with all sorts of books, both of his own and all other faculties, took no occasion at all to entertain himself with any of them, but fell very rudely and magisterially to descant upon a barricade placed on the winding stair before the study door, a thing that a hundred captains and common soldiers see every day without taking any notice or offence :—

"Optat ephippia bos piger, optat arare caballus."[2]

By this course a man shall never improve himself, nor arrive at any perfection in anything. He must, therefore, make it his business always to put the architect, the painter, the statuary, every mechanic artisan, upon discourse of their own capacities.

And, to this purpose, in reading histories, which is everybody's subject, I use to consider what kind of men are the authors: if they be persons that profess nothing but mere letters, I, in and from them, principally observe and learn style and language; if physicians, I the rather incline to credit what they report of the temperature of the air, of the health and complexions of princes, of wounds and diseases; if lawyers, we are from them to take notice of the controversies of rights and wrongs, the establishment of laws and civil government, and the like; if divines, the affairs of the Church, ecclesiastical censures, marriages, and dispensations; if courtiers, manners and ceremonies; if soldiers, the things that properly belong to their

[1] Diod. Sic., xv. 6.

[2] "The lazy ox desires a saddle and bridle; the horse wants to plough."—Hor., *Ep.*, i. 14, 43.

trade, and, principally, the accounts of the actions and enterprises wherein they were personally engaged; if ambassadors, we are to observe negotiations, intelligences, and practices, and the manner how they are to be carried on.

And this is the reason why (which perhaps I should have lightly passed over in another) I dwelt upon and maturely considered one passage in the history written by Monsieur de Langey,[1] a man of very great judgment in things of that nature: after having given a narrative of the fine oration Charles V. had made in the Consistory at Rome, and in the presence of the Bishop of Macon and Monsieur du Velly, our ambassadors there, wherein he had mixed several injurious expressions to the dishonour of our nation; and amongst the rest, "that if his captains and soldiers were not men of another kind of fidelity, resolution, and sufficiency in the knowledge of arms than those of the King, he would immediately go with a rope about his neck and sue to him for mercy" (and it should seem the Emperor had really this, or a very little better opinion of our military men, for he afterwards, twice or thrice in his life, said the very same thing); as also, that he challenged the King to fight him in his shirt with rapier and poignard in a boat. The said Sieur de Langey, pursuing his history, adds that the forenamed ambassadors, sending a despatch to the King of these things, concealed the greatest part, and particularly the last two passages. At which I could not but wonder that it should be in the power of an ambassador to dispense with anything which he ought to signify to his master, especially of so great importance as this, coming from the mouth

[1] Martin du Bellay, in his *Mémoires*, liv. v.

of such a person, and spoken in so great an assembly; and I should rather conceive it had been the servant's duty faithfully to have represented to him the whole thing as it passed, to the end that the liberty of selecting, disposing, judging, and concluding might have remained in him: for either to conceal or to disguise the truth for fear he should take it otherwise than he ought to do, and lest it should prompt him to some extravagant resolution, and, in the meantime, to leave him ignorant of his affairs, should seem, methinks, rather to belong to him who is to give the law than to him who is only to receive it; to him who is in supreme command, and not to him who ought to look upon himself as inferior, not only in authority, but also in prudence and good counsel. I, for my part, would not be so served in my little concerns.

We so willingly slip the collar of command upon any pretence whatever, and are so ready to usurp upon dominion, every one does so naturally aspire to liberty and power, that no utility whatever derived from the wit or valour of those he employs ought to be so dear to a superior as a downright and sincere obedience. To obey more upon the account of understanding than of subjection, is to corrupt the office of command[1]: insomuch that P. Crassus, the same whom the Romans reputed five times happy, at the time when he was consul in Asia, having sent to a Greek engineer to cause the greater of two masts of ships that he had taken notice of at Athens to be brought to him, to be employed about some engine of battery he had a design to make; the other, presuming upon his own science and sufficiency in those affairs, thought fit to do otherwise than directed, and to bring the

[1] Taken from Aulus Gellius, i. 13.

less, which, according to the rules of art, was really more proper for the use to which it was designed; but Crassus, though he gave ear to his reasons with great patience, would not, however, take them, how sound or convincing soever, for current pay, but caused him to be well whipped for his pains, valuing the interest of discipline much more than that of the work in hand.

Notwithstanding, we may on the other side consider that so precise and implicit an obedience as this is only due to positive and limited commands. The employment of ambassadors is never so confined, many things in their management of affairs being wholly referred to the absolute sovereignty of their own conduct; they do not simply execute, but also, to their own discretion and wisdom, form and model their master's pleasure. I have, in my time, known men of command checked for having rather obeyed the express words of the king's letters, than the necessity of the affairs they had in hand. Men of understanding do yet, to this day, condemn the custom of the kings of Persia to give their lieutenants and agents so little rein, that, upon the least arising difficulties, they must fain have recourse to their further commands; this delay, in so vast an extent of dominion, having often very much prejudiced their affairs; and Crassus, writing to a man whose profession it was best to understand those things, and pre-acquainting him to what use this mast was designed, did he not seem to consult his advice, and in a manner invite him to interpose his better judgment?

CHAPTER XVII

OF FEAR

"Obstupui, steteruntque comæ et vox faucibus hæsit."[1]

I AM[2] not so good a naturalist (as they call it) as to discern by what secret springs fear has its motion in us; but, be this as it may, 'tis a strange passion, and such a one that the physicians say there is no other whatever that sooner dethrones our judgment from its proper seat; which is so true, that I myself have seen very many become frantic through fear; and, even in those of the best settled temper it is most certain that it begets a terrible astonishment and confusion during the fit. I omit the vulgar sort, to whom it one while represents their great-grandsires risen out of their graves in their shrouds, another while werwolves, nightmares, and chimæras; but even amongst soldiers, a sort of men over whom, of all others, it ought to have the least power, how often has it converted flocks of sheep into armed squadrons, reeds and bullrushes into pikes and lances, friends into enemies, and the French white cross into the red cross of Spain! When Monsieur

[1] "I was amazed, my hair stood on end, and my voice stuck in my jaws."—Virgil, *Æneid*, ii. 774.

[2] "I am no good Naturalist (as they say), and I know not well by what springs feare doth work in vs: but well I wot it is a strange passion; and as Physitians say, there is none doth sooner transport our judgement out of its due seat. Verily, I have seene divers become madde and senselesse for feare: yea, and him who is most setled, and best resolved, it is certaine that whilest his fitte continueth, it begetteth many strange dazelings, and terrible amazements in him. I omit to speake of the vulgar sort, to whom it sometimes representeth strange apparitions, as their fathers and grandfathers' ghosts, risen out of their graves, and in their winding-sheetes: and to others it sometimes sheweth Larves, Hobgoblins, Robbin-good-fellowes, and such other Bug-beares and Chimærres."—Florio, 1613, p. 27.

de Bourbon took Rome,[1] an ensign who was upon guard at Borgo San Pietro was seized with such a fright upon the first alarm, that he threw himself out at a breach with his colours upon his shoulder, and ran directly upon the enemy, thinking he had retreated toward the inward defences of the city, and with much ado, seeing Monsieur de Bourbon's people, who thought it had been a sally upon them, draw up to receive him, at last came to himself, and saw his error; and then facing about, he retreated full speed through the same breach by which he had gone out, but not till he had first blindly advanced above three hundred paces into the open field. It did not, however, fall out so well with Captain Giulio's ensign, at the time when St. Paul was taken from us by the Comte de Bures and Monsieur de Reu, for he, being so astonished with fear as to throw himself, colours and all, out of a porthole, was immediately cut to pieces by the enemy; and in the same siege, it was a very memorable fear that so seized, contracted, and froze up the heart of a gentleman, that he sank down, stone-dead, in the breach, without any manner of wound or hurt at all. The like madness does sometimes push on a whole multitude; for in one of the encounters that Germanicus had with the Germans, two great parties were so amazed with fear that they ran two opposite ways, the one to the same place from which the other had fled.[2] Sometimes it adds wings to the heels, as in the two first: sometimes it nails them to the ground, and fetters them from moving; as we read of the Emperor Theophilus, who, in a battle he lost against the Agarenes, was so astonished and stupefied that he had no power to fly :—

[1] In 1527.

[2] Tacit, *Annal.*, i. 63.

"Adeo pavor etiam auxilia formidat"[1]

—till such time as Manuel, one of the principal commanders of his army, having jogged and shaked him so as to rouse him out of his trance, said to him, "Sir, if you will not follow me, I will kill you; for it is better you should lose your life than, by being taken, lose your empire."[2] But fear does then manifest its utmost power when it throws us upon a valiant despair, having before deprived us of all sense both of duty and honour. In the first pitched battle the Romans lost against Hannibal, under the Consul Sempronius, a body of ten thousand foot, that had taken fright, seeing no other escape for their cowardice, went and threw themselves headlong upon the great battalion of the enemies, which with marvellous force and fury they charged through and through, and routed with a very great slaughter of the Carthaginians, thus purchasing an ignominious flight at the same price they might have gained a glorious victory.[3]

The thing in the world I am most afraid of is fear, that passion alone, in the trouble of it, exceeding all other accidents. What affliction could be greater or more just than that of Pompey's friends, who, in his ship, were spectators of that horrible murder? Yet so it was, that the fear of the Egyptian vessels they saw coming to board them, possessed them with so great alarm that it is observed they thought of nothing but calling upon the mariners to make haste, and by force of oars to escape away, till being arrived at Tyre, and delivered from fear, they had leisure to turn their thoughts to the loss of their captain,

[1] "So much does fear dread even the means of safety."—Quint. Curt., ii. 11.

[2] Zonaras, lib. iii.

[3] Livy, xxi. 56.

and to give vent to those tears and lamentations that the other more potent passion had till then suspended [1]:—

"Tum pavor sapientiam omnem mihi ex animo expectorat."[2]

Such as have been well rubbed in some skirmish, may yet, all wounded and bloody as they are, be brought on again the next day to charge; but such as have once conceived a good sound fear of the enemy, will never be made so much as to look him in the face. Such as are in immediate fear of losing their estates, of banishment, or of slavery, live in perpetual anguish, and lose all appetite and repose; whereas such as are actually poor, slaves, or exiles, ofttimes live as merrily as other folk. And the many people who, impatient of the perpetual alarms of fear, have hanged or drowned themselves, or dashed themselves to pieces, give us sufficiently to understand that fear is more importunate and insupportable than death itself.

The Greeks acknowledged another kind of fear, differing from any we have spoken of yet, that surprises us without any visible cause, by an impulse from heaven, so that whole nations and whole armies have been struck with it. Such a one was that which brought so wonderful a desolation upon Carthage, where nothing was to be heard but affrighted voices and outcries; where the inhabitants were seen to sally out of their houses as to an alarm, and there to charge, wound, and kill one another, as if they had been enemies come to surprise their city. All things were in disorder and fury till, with prayers and sacrifices, they had

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæst.*, iii. 26.

[2] "Then fear drives out all intelligence from my mind."—Ennius, *ap.* Cicero, *Tusc.*, iv. 8.

appeased their gods[1]; and this is that they call panic terrors.[2]

CHAPTER XVIII

THAT WE ARE NOT TO JUDGE OF OUR HOUR TILL AFTER DEATH.[3]

"Scilicet ultima semper
Exspectanda dies homini est; dicique beatus
Ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet."[4]

The very children know the story of King Crœsus to this purpose, who being taken prisoner by Cyrus, and by him condemned to die, as he was going to execution cried out, "O Solon, Solon!" which being presently reported to Cyrus, and he sending to inquire of him what it meant, Crœsus gave him to understand that he now found the teaching Solon had formerly given him true to his cost, which was, "That men, however fortune may smile upon them, could never be said to be happy till they had been seen to pass over the last day of their lives," by reason of the uncertainty and mutability of human things, which, upon very light and trivial occasions, are subject to be totally changed into a quite contrary condition. And so it was that Agesilaus made answer to one who was saying what a happy young man the King of Persia was, to come so young to so mighty a kingdom: "'Tis true," said he, "but neither was Priam unhappy at his years."[5]

[1] Diod. Sic., xv. 7. [2] *Ibid.*; Plutarch on Isis and Osiris, c. 8.

[3] Charron has borrowed with unusual liberality from this and the succeeding chapter. See Nodier, *Questions*, p. 206.

[4] "In truth a man must be for ever looking for his last day; no one should be called happy before his death and sepulture."—Ovid, *Met.*, iii. 135.

[5] Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.*

In a short time, kings of Macedon, successors to that mighty Alexander, became joiners and scriveners at Rome; a tyrant of Sicily, a pedant at Corinth; a conqueror of one-half of the world and general of so many armies, a miserable suppliant to the rascally officers of a king of Egypt: so much did the prolongation of five or six months of life cost the great Pompey; and, in our fathers' days, Ludovico Sforza, the tenth Duke of Milan, whom all Italy had so long truckled under, was seen to die a wretched prisoner at Loches, but not till he had lived ten years in captivity,[1] which was the worst part of his fortune. The fairest of all queens,[2] widow to the greatest king in Europe, did she not come to die by the hand of an executioner? Unworthy and barbarous cruelty! And a thousand more examples there are of the same kind; for it seems that as storms and tempests have a malice against the proud and overtowering heights of our lofty buildings, there are also spirits above that are envious of the greatnesses here below:—

> "Usque adeo res humanas vis abdita quædam
> Obterit, et pulchros fasces, sævasque secures
> Proculcare, ac ludibrio sibi habere videtur."[3]

And it should seem, also, that Fortune sometimes lies in wait to surprise the last hour of our lives, to show the power she has, in a moment, to overthrow

[1] He was imprisoned by Louis XI. in an iron cage part of the time; but the rigour of his confinement was so far eventually relaxed that he had comparative liberty, and was allowed to play at tennis and cards, of both of which pastimes he was very fond. See Hazlitt's *Venetian Republic*, 1900, ii. 138.

[2] Mary, Queen of Scots. Montaigne had repeated opportunities of seeing the Queen at Paris or elsewhere. We hardly know what his ideal of female beauty was. But Mary was then young.

[3] "Down to this time some occult power upsets human affairs, the glittering fasces and the cruel axes spurns under foot, and seems to hold them in ridicule."—Lucretius, v. 1231.

what she was so many years in building, making us cry out with Laberius :—

> "Nimirum hâc die
> Una plus vixi mihi, quam vivendum fuit."[1]

And, in this sense, this good advice of Solon may reasonably be taken ; but he, being a philosopher (with which sort of men the favours and disgraces of Fortune stand for nothing, either to the making a man happy or unhappy, and with whom grandeurs and powers are accidents of a quality almost indifferent) I am apt to think that he had some further aim, and that his meaning was, that the very felicity of life itself, which depends upon the tranquillity and contentment of a well-descended spirit, and the resolution and assurance of a well-ordered soul, ought never to be attributed to any man till he has first been seen to play the last, and, doubtless, the hardest act of his part. There may be disguise and dissimulation in all the rest : where these fine philosophical discourses are only put on, and where accident, not touching us to the quick, gives us leisure to maintain the same gravity of aspect ; but, in this last scene of death, there is no more counterfeiting : we must speak out plain, and discover what there is of good and clean in the bottom of the pot :—

> "Nam veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imo
> Ejiciuntur : et eripitur persona, manet res."[2]

Wherefore, at this last, all the other actions of our life ought to be tried and sifted : 'tis the master-day,

[1] "Forsooth I have lived longer by this one day than I should have done."—Macrobius, ii. 7.

[2] "For true accents then at last issue from the heart ; the visor's gone, the man remains."—Lucretius, iii. 57.

'tis the day that is judge of all the rest, "'tis the day," says one of the ancients,[1] "that must be judge of all my foregoing years." To death do I refer the assay of the fruit of all my studies: we shall then see whether my discourses came only from my mouth or from my heart. I have seen many by their death give a good or an ill repute to their whole life. Scipio, the father-in-law of Pompey, in dying, well removed the ill opinion that till then every one had conceived of him.[2] Epaminondas being asked which of the three he had in greatest esteem, Chabrias, Iphicrates, or himself. "You must first see us die," said he, "before that question can be resolved."[3] And, in truth, he would infinitely wrong that man who would weigh him without the honour and grandeur of his end.

God has ordered all things as it has best pleased Him; but I have, in my time, seen three of the most execrable persons that ever I knew in all manner of abominable living, and the most infamous to boot, who all died a very regular death, and in all circumstances composed, even to perfection. There are brave and fortunate deaths: I have seen death cut the thread of the progress of a prodigious advancement, and in the height and flower of its increase, of a certain person,[4] with so glorious an end that, in my opinion, his ambitious and generous designs had nothing in them so high and great as their interruption. He arrived, without completing his course, at the place to which his ambition aimed, with greater glory than he could either have hoped or desired, anticipating by his fall the name and power to which he aspired in perfecting his career.

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 102. [2] Idem, *Ep.*, 24. [3] Plutarch, *Apoth.*
[4] Montaigne doubtless refers to his friend Etienne de la Boetie, at whose death in 1563 he was present.

In the judgment I make of another man's life, I always observe how he carried himself at his death; and the principal concern I have for my own is that I may die well—that is, patiently and tranquilly.

CHAPTER XIX

THAT TO PHILOSOPHISE IS TO LEARN TO DIE

Cicero says[1] "that to study philosophy is nothing but to prepare one's self to die. The reason of which is, because study and contemplation do in some sort withdraw from us our soul, and employ it separately from the body, which is a kind of apprenticeship and a resemblance of death; or, else, because all the wisdom and reasoning in the world do in the end conclude in this point, to teach us not to fear to die. And to say the truth, either our reason mocks us, or it ought to have no other aim but our contentment only, nor to endeavour anything but, in sum, to make us live well, and, as the Holy Scripture says,[2] at our ease. All the opinions of the world agree in this, that pleasure is our end, though we make use of divers means to attain it: they would, otherwise, be rejected at the first motion; for who would give ear to him that should propose affliction and misery for his end? The controversies and disputes of the philosophical sects upon this point are merely verbal:—

"Transcurramus solertissimas nugas"[3]

[1] Tusc., i. 31. This essay may be advantageously compared with passages in *Hamlet*, iii. 1, and *Measure for Measure*, iii. 1, on which the Editor has offered remarks in his *New Essay on Shakespeare*.

[2] Eccles. iii. 12, where, however, the exact text is, "For a man to rejoice and to do good in his life."

[3] "Let us skip over those subtle trifles."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 117.

—there is more in them of opposition and obstinacy than is consistent with so sacred a profession; but whatsoever personage a man takes upon himself to perform, he ever mixes his own part with it.

Let the philosophers say what they will, the main thing at which we all aim, even in virtue itself, is pleasure. It amuses me to rattle in their ears this word, which they so nauseate to hear; and if it signify some supreme pleasure and excessive contentment, it is more due to the assistance of virtue than to any other assistance whatever. This pleasure, for being more gay, more sinewy, more robust, and more manly, is only the more seriously voluptuous, and we ought to give it the name of pleasure, as that which is more favourable, gentle, and natural, and not that of vigour, from which we have denominated it. The other, and meaner pleasure, if it could deserve this fair name, it ought to be by way of competition, and not of privilege. I find it less exempt from traverses and inconveniences than virtue itself; and, besides that the enjoyment is more momentary, fluid, and frail, it has its watchings, fasts, and labours, its sweat and its blood; and, moreover, has particular to itself so many several sorts of sharp and wounding passions, and so dull a satiety attending it, as equal it to the severest penance. And we mistake if we think that these incommodities serve it for a spur and a seasoning to its sweetness (as in nature one contrary is quickened by another), or say, when we come to virtue, that like consequences and difficulties overwhelm and render it austere and inaccessible; whereas, much more aptly than in voluptuousness, they ennoble, sharpen, and heighten the perfect and divine pleasure they procure us. He renders himself unworthy of it

who will counterpoise its cost with its fruit, and neither understands the blessing nor how to use it. Those who preach to us that the quest of it is craggy, difficult, and painful, but its fruition pleasant, what do they mean by that but to tell us that it is always unpleasing? For what human means will ever attain its enjoyment? The most perfect have been fain to content themselves to aspire unto it, and to approach it only, without ever possessing it. But they are deceived, seeing that of all the pleasures we know, the very pursuit is pleasant. The attempt ever relishes of the quality of the thing to which it is directed, for it is a good part of, and consubstantial with, the effect. The felicity and beatitude that glitters in Virtue, shines throughout all her appurtenances and avenues, even to the first entry and utmost limits.

Now, of all the benefits that virtue confers upon us, the contempt of death is one of the greatest, as the means that accommodates human life with a soft and easy tranquillity, and gives us a pure and pleasant taste of living, without which all other pleasure would be extinct. Which is the reason why all the rules centre and concur in this one article. And although they all in like manner, with common accord, teach us also to despise pain, poverty, and the other accidents to which human life is subject, it is not, nevertheless, with the same solicitude, as well by reason these accidents are not of so great necessity, the greater part of mankind passing over their whole lives without ever knowing what poverty is, and some without sorrow or sickness, as Xenophilus the musician, who lived a hundred and six years in a perfect and continual health; as also because, at the worst, death can, whenever we please, cut short and put an end to

all other inconveniences. But as to death, it is inevitable :—

> "Omnes eodem cogimur; omnium
> Versatur urna serius ocius:
> Sors exitura, et nos in æternum
> Exilium impositura cymbæ," [1]

and, consequently, if it frights us, 'tis a perpetual torment, for which there is no sort of consolation. There is no way by which it may not reach us. We may continually turn our heads this way and that, as in a suspected country :—

> "Quæ, quasi saxum Tantalo, semper impendet." [2]

Our courts of justice often send back condemned criminals to be executed upon the place where the crime was committed; but, carry them to fine houses by the way, prepare for them the best entertainment you can :—

> "Non Siculæ dapes
> Dulcem elaborabunt saporem:
> Non avium citharæque cantus
> Somnum reducent." [3]

Do you think they can relish it? and that the fatal end of their journey being continually before their eyes, would not alter and deprave their palate from tasting these regalios?—

> "Audit iter, numeratque dies, spatioque viarum
> Metitur vitam; torquetur peste futura." [4]

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[1] "We are all bound one way; the urn of all is overturned sooner or later. It is our lot to depart, and to go into eternal banishment in the skiff. All must to eternal exile sail away."—Hor., *Od.*, ii. 3, 25.

[2] "Which ever, like the stone over Tantalus, hangs over us."—Cicero, *De Finib.*, i. 18.

[3] "Not Sicilian dainties will yield a sweet flavour, nor the melody of birds and harps bring back sleep."—Hor., *Od.*, iii. 1, 18.

[4] "He comprehends the route, computes the days, and measures his life by the length of the journey; he is racked by the coming trouble."—Claudianus, *in Rufinum*, ii. 137. For *regalios* Florio has *commodities and allurements*.

The end of our race is death; 'tis the necessary object of our aim, which, if it fright us, how is it possible to advance a step without a fit of ague? The remedy the vulgar use is not to think on't; but from what brutish stupidity can they derive so gross a blindness? They must bridle the ass by the tail:—

"Qui capite ipse suo instituit vestigia retro,"[1]

'tis no wonder if he be often trapped in the pitfall. They affright people with the very mention of death, and many cross themselves, as it were the name of the devil. And because the making a man's will is in reference to dying, not a man will be persuaded to take a pen in hand to that purpose, till the physician has passed sentence upon him, and totally given him over, and then betwixt grief and terror, God knows in how fit a condition of understanding he is to do it.

The Romans, by reason that this poor syllable *death* sounded so harshly to their ears and seemed so ominous, found out a way to soften and spin it out by a periphrasis, and instead of pronouncing such a one is dead, said, "Such a one has lived," or "Such a one has ceased to live"[2]; for, provided there was any mention of life in the case, though past, it carried yet some sound of consolation. And from them it is that we have borrowed our expression, "feu Monsieur un tel." Peradventure, as the saying is, the term we have lived is worth our money. I was born betwixt eleven and twelve o'clock in the forenoon the last day of February 1533, according to our computation, beginning the

[1] "Who in his folly seeks to advance backwards."—Lucretius, iv. 471.

[2] Plutarch, Life of Cicero, c. 22.

year the 1st of January,[1] and it is now but just fifteen days since I was complete nine-and-thirty years old; I make account to live, at least, as many more.[2] In the meantime, to trouble a man's self with the thought of a thing so far off were folly. But what? Young and old die upon the same terms; no one departs out of life otherwise than if he had but just before entered into it; neither is any man so old and decrepit, who, having heard of Methuselah, does not think he has yet twenty good years to come. Fool that thou art! who has assured unto thee the term of life? Thou dependest upon physicians' tales: rather consult effects and experience. According to the common course of things, 'tis long since that thou hast lived by extraordinary favour; thou hast already outlived the ordinary term of life. And that it is so, reckon up thy acquaintance, how many more have died before they arrived at thy age than have attained unto it; and of those who have ennobled their lives by their renown, take but an account, and I dare lay a wager thou wilt find more who have died before than after five-and-thirty years of age. It is full both of reason and piety, too, to take example by the humanity of Jesus Christ Himself; now, He ended His life at three-and-thirty years. The greatest man, that was no more than a man, Alexander, died also at the same age. How many several ways has death to surprise us?

> "Quid quisque, vitet, nunquam homini satis
> Cautum est in horas."[3]

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[1] This was in virtue of an ordinance of Charles IX. in 1563. Previously the year commenced at Easter, so that the 1st January 1563 became the first day of the year 1564.

[2] Montaigne did not realise his expectation, as he died in 1592.

[3] "Whatever each man may avoid, he is never cautious enough at times."—Hor. *Od.*, ii. 13, 13.

To omit fevers and pleurisies, who would ever have imagined that a duke of Brittany[1] should be pressed to death in a crowd as that duke was at the entry of Pope Clement, my neighbour, into Lyons?[2] Hast thou not seen one of our kings[3] killed at a tilting, and did not one of his ancestors die by collision with a hog?[4] Æschylus, threatened with the fall of a house, was to much purpose circumspect to avoid that danger, seeing that he was knocked on the head by a tortoise falling out of an eagle's talons in the air.[5] Another was choked with a grape-stone[6]; an emperor killed with the scratch of a comb in combing his head. Æmilius Lepidus with a stumble at his own threshold,[7] and Aufidius with a jostle against the door as he entered the council-chamber. And betwixt the very thighs of women, Cornelius Gallus the prætor[8]; Tigillinus, captain of the watch at Rome; Ludovico, son of Guidone di Gonzaga, Captain of Mantua; and (of worse example) Speusippus, a Platonic philosopher,[9] and one of our Popes.[10] The poor judge Bebius gave adjournment in a case for eight days; but he himself, meanwhile, was condemned by death, and his own stay of life expired. Whilst Caius Julius,

[1] Jean II. died 1305.

[2] Montaigne speaks of him as if he had been a contemporary neighbour, perhaps because he was the Archbishop of Bordeaux. Bertrand le Goth was Pope under the title of Clement V., 1305–14.

[3] Henry II., killed in a tournament, July 10, 1559.

[4] Philip, eldest son of Louis le Gros.

[5] Val. Max., ix. 12, ext. 2.

[6] Idem, *ibid.*, ext. 8. The Greek poet Anacreon.

[7] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, vii. 33.

[8] A similar fate befell a learned judge here in England some years ago.

[9] Diogenes Laertius (iv. 9) says he killed himself, tired of old age and infirmity.

[10] The reference may be, probably is, to Alexander VI., who died a violent death in 1492.

the physician, was anointing the eyes of a patient, death closed his own; and, if I may bring in an example of my own blood, a brother of mine, Captain St. Martin, a young man, three-and-twenty years old, who had already given sufficient testimony of his valour, playing a match at tennis, received a blow of a ball a little above his right ear, which, as it gave no manner of sign of wound or contusion, he took no notice of it, nor so much as sat down to repose himself, but, nevertheless, died within five or six hours after of an apoplexy occasioned by that blow.

These so frequent and common examples passing every day before our eyes, how is it possible a man should disengage himself from the thought of death, or avoid fancying that it has us every moment by the throat? What matter is it, you will say, which way it comes to pass, provided a man does not terrify himself with the expectation? For my part, I am of this mind, and if a man could by any means avoid it, though by creeping under a calf's skin, I am one that should not be ashamed of the shift; all I aim at is, to pass my time at my ease, and the recreations that will most contribute to it, I take hold of, as little glorious and exemplary as you will:—

> "Prætulerim . . . delirus inersque videri,
> Dum mea delectent mala me, vel denique fallant,
> Quam sapere, et ringi."[1]

But 'tis folly to think of doing anything that way. They go, they come, they gallop and dance, and not a word of death. All this is very fine; but withal, when it comes either to themselves, their wives, their children, or friends, surprising them at

[1] "I should prefer to seem mad and a sluggard, so that my defects are agreeable to myself, or that I am not painfully conscious of them, than be wise, and chafe."—Hor., *Ep.*, ii. 2, 126.

unawares and unprepared, then, what torment, what outcries, what madness and despair! Did you ever see anything so subdued, so changed, and so confounded? A man must, therefore, make more early provision for it; and this brutish negligence, could it possibly lodge in the brain of any man of sense (which I think utterly impossible), sells us its merchandise too dear. Were it an enemy that could be avoided, I would then advise to borrow arms even of cowardice itself; but seeing it is not, and that it will catch you as well flying and playing the poltroon, as standing to't like an honest man:—

> "Nempe et fugacem persequitur virum,
> Nec parcit imbellis juventæ
> Poplitibus timidoque tergo."[1]

And seeing that no temper of arms is of proof to secure us:—

> "Ille licet ferro cautus, se condat et ære,
> Mors tamen inclusum protrahet inde caput"[2]

—let us learn bravely to stand our ground, and fight him. And to begin to deprive him of the greatest advantage he has over us, let us take a way quite contrary to the common course. Let us disarm him of his novelty and strangeness, let us converse and be familiar with him, and have nothing so frequent in our thoughts as death. Upon all occasions represent him to our imagination in his every shape; at the stumbling of a horse, at the falling of a tile, at the least prick with a pin, let us presently consider, and say to ourselves, "Well, and what if it had been death itself?" and, there-

[1] "He pursues the man who flees from him, nor spares the hamstrings of the unwarlike youth and his fearful back."—Hor., *Ep.*, iii. 2, 14.

[2] "Though he take the precaution to cover himself with iron or brass, death will pull his head out thence."—Propertius, iii. 18.

upon, let us encourage and fortify ourselves. Let us evermore, amidst our jollity and feasting, set the remembrance of our frail condition before our eyes, never suffering ourselves to be so far transported with our delights, but that we have some intervals of reflecting upon, and considering how many several ways this jollity of ours tends to death, and with how many dangers it threatens it. The Egyptians were wont to do after this manner, who in the height of their feasting and mirth, caused a dried skeleton of a man to be brought into the room to serve for a memento to their guests :—

> "Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum :
> Grata superveniet, quæ non sperabitur, hora."[1]

Where death waits for us is uncertain ; let us look for him everywhere. The premeditation of death is the premeditation of liberty ; he who has learned to die has unlearned to serve. There is nothing evil in life for him who rightly comprehends that the privation of life is no evil : to know how to die delivers us from all subjection and constraint. Paulus Æmilius answered him whom the miserable King of Macedon, his prisoner, sent to entreat him that he would not lead him in his triumph, "Let him make that request to himself."[2]

In truth, in all things, if nature do not help a little, it is very hard for art and industry to perform anything to purpose. I am in my own nature not melancholic, but meditative ; and there is nothing I have more continually entertained myself withal than imaginations of death, even in the most wanton time of my age :—

[1] "Think that each day has dawned for thee the last ; the hour which shall follow will be the more grateful."—Hor., *Ep.*, i. 4, 13.
[2] Plutarch, *Life of Paulus Æmilius*, c. 17 ; Cicero, *Tusc.*, v. 40.

"Jucundum quum ætas florida ver ageret,"[1]

In the company of ladies, and at games, some have perhaps thought me possessed with some jealousy, or the uncertainty of some hope, whilst I was entertaining myself with the remembrance of some one, surprised, a few days before, with a burning fever of which he died, returning from an entertainment like this, with his head full of idle fancies of love and jollity, as mine was then, and that, for aught I knew, the same destiny was attending me.

"Jam fuerit, nec post unquam revocare licebit."[2]

Yet did not this thought wrinkle my forehead any more than any other. It is impossible but we must feel a sting in such imaginations as these, at first; but with often turning and re-turning them in one's mind, they, at last, become so familiar as to be no trouble at all: otherwise, I, for my part, should be in a perpetual fright and frenzy; for never man was so distrustful of his life, never man so uncertain as to its duration. Neither health, which I have hitherto ever enjoyed very strong and vigorous, and very seldom interrupted, does prolong, nor sickness contract my hopes. Every minute, methinks, I am escaping, and it eternally runs in my mind, that what may be done to-morrow, may be done to-day. Hazards and dangers do, in truth, little or nothing hasten our end; and if we consider how many thousands more remain and hang over our heads, besides the accident that immediately threatens us, we shall find that the sound and the sick, those that are abroad at sea, and those that sit by the fire, those who are engaged in battle, and

[1] "When my florid age rejoiced in pleasant spring."—Catullus, lxviii.
[2] "Presently the present will have gone, never to be recalled."—Lucretius, iii. 928.

those who sit idle at home, are the one as near it as the other.

"Nemo altero fragilior est; nemo in crastinum sui certior."[1]

For anything I have to do before I die, the longest leisure would appear too short, were it but an hour's business I had to do.

A friend of mine the other day turning over my tablets,[2] found therein a memorandum of something I would have done after my decease, whereupon I told him, as it was really true, that though I was no more than a league's distance only from my own house, and merry and well, yet when that thing came into my head, I made haste to write it down there, because I was not certain to live till I came home. As a man that am eternally brooding over my own thoughts, and confine them to my own particular concerns, I am at all hours as well prepared as I am ever like to be, and death, whenever he shall come, can bring nothing along with him I did not expect long before. We should always, as near as we can, be booted and spurred, and ready to go, and, above all things, take care, at that time, to have no business with any one but one's self:—

"Quid brevi fortes jaculamur ævo
Multa?"[3]

for we shall there find work enough to do, without any need of addition. One man complains, more

[1] "No man is more fragile than another: no man more certain than another of to-morrow."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 91.

[2] Montaigne, when he went to Italy, carried his Essays with him, probably for the sake of making additions or corrections, as they occurred to his mind; but in his shorter absences from home he seems to have used tablets for current memoranda, as his English contemporaries did. These tablets are mentioned by Shakespear in *Hamlet.*

[3] "Why in our short life do we, when we are strong, aim at many things?"—Hor., *Od.*, ii. 16, 17.

than of death, that he is thereby prevented of a glorious victory; another, that he must die before he has married his daughter, or educated his children; a third seems only troubled that he must lose the society of his wife; a fourth, the conversation of his son, as the principal comfort and concern of his being. For my part, I am, thanks be to God, at this instant in such a condition, that I am ready to dislodge, whenever it shall please Him, without regret for anything whatsoever. I disengage myself throughout from all worldly relations; my leave is soon taken of all but myself. Never did any one prepare to bid adieu to the world more absolutely and unreservedly, and to shake hands with all manner of interest in it, than I expect to do. The deadest deaths are the best:—

> "'Miser, O miser,' aiunt, 'omnia ademit
> Una dies infesta mihi tot præmia vitæ.'"[1]

And the builder:—

> "Pendent opera interrupta, minæque
> Murorum ingentes."[2]

A man must design nothing that will require so much time to the finishing, or, at least, with no such passionate desire to see it brought to perfection. We are born to action:—

> "Quum moriar, medium solvar et inter opus."[3]

I would always have a man to be doing, and, as much as in him lies, to extend and spin out the offices of life: and then let death take me planting

[1] "'Wretch that I am,' they cry, 'one fatal day has deprived me of all joys of life.'"—Lucretius, iii. 911.

[2] "The works are suspended, the huge pinnacles of the walls unmade."—*Æneid*, iv. 88.

[3] "When I shall die, let me be released even amid my work."—Ovid, *Amor.*, ii. 10, 36.

my cabbages, indifferent to him, and still less of my garden not being finished. I saw one die, who, at his last gasp, complained of nothing so much as that destiny was about to cut the thread of a chronicle he was then compiling, when he was gone no farther than the fifteenth or sixteenth of our kings :—

> "Illud in his rebus non addunt: nec tibi earum
> Jam desiderium rerum insidet insuper una."[1]

We are to discharge ourselves from these vulgar and hurtful humours. To this purpose it was that men first appointed the places of sepulture adjoining the churches, and in the most frequented places of the city, to accustom, says Lycurgus,[2] the common people, women, and children, that they should not be startled at the sight of a corpse, and to the end, that the continual spectacle of bones, graves, and funeral obsequies should put us in mind of our frail condition :—

> "Quin etiam exhilarare viris convivia cæde
> Mos olim, et miscere epulis spectacula dira
> Certantum ferro, sæpe et super ipsa cadentum
> Pocula, respersis non parco sanguine mensis."[3]

And as the Egyptians after their feasts were wont to present the company with a great image of death, by one that cried out to them, "Drink and be merry, for such shalt thou be when thou art dead"; so it is my custom to have death not only in my imagination, but continually in my mouth.

[1] "That in these things they do not add; nor does the desire of one of them survive in thee."—Lucretius, iii. 913.

[2] Plutarch, *in Vita.*

[3] "It was formerly the custom to enliven banquets with slaughter, and to combine with the repast the dire spectacle of men contending with the sword, the dying in many cases falling upon the cups, and covering the tables with blood."—Silius Italicus, xi. 51.

Neither is there anything of which I am so inquisitive, and delight to inform myself, as the manner of men's deaths, their words, looks, and bearing; nor any places in history I am so intent upon; and it is manifest enough, by my crowding in examples of this kind, that I have a particular fancy for that subject. If I were a writer of books, I would compile a register, with a comment, of the various deaths of men: he who should teach men to die would at the same time teach them to live. Dicarchus made one, to which he gave that title; but it was designed for another and less profitable end.[1]

Peradventure, some one may object, that the pain and terror of dying so infinitely exceed all manner of imagination, that the best fencer will be quite out of his play when it comes to the push. Let them say what they will: to premeditate is doubtless a very great advantage; and besides, is it nothing to go so far, at least, without disturbance or alteration? Moreover, Nature herself assists and encourages us: if the death be sudden and violent, we have not leisure to fear; if otherwise, I perceive that as I engage further in my disease, I naturally enter into a certain loathing and disdain of life. I find I have much more ado to digest this resolution of dying, when I am well in health, than when languishing of a fever; and by how much I have less to do with the commodities of life, by reason that I begin to lose the use and pleasure of them, by so much I look upon death with less terror. Which makes me hope, that the further I remove from the first, and the nearer I approach to

[1] Cicero, *De Offic.*, ii. 5. The work intended is the treatise *De Interitu Hominum*. Dicæarchus of Messina in Sicily seems to have been a sceptic. He is often mentioned by Athenæus.

the latter, I shall the more easily exchange the one for the other. And, as I have experienced in other occurrences, that, as Cæsar says,[1] things often appear greater to us at distance than near at hand, I have found, that being well, I have had maladies in much greater horror than when really afflicted with them. The vigour wherein I now am, the cheerfulness and delight wherein I now live, make the contrary estate appear in so great a disproportion to my present condition, that, by imagination, I magnify those inconveniences by one-half, and apprehend them to be much more troublesome, than I find them really to be, when they lie the most heavy upon me; I hope to find death the same.

Let us but observe in the ordinary changes and declinations we daily suffer, how nature deprives us of the light and sense of our bodily decay. What remains to an old man of the vigour of his youth and better days?—

"Heu! senibus vitæ portio quanta manet."[2]

Cæsar, to an old weather-beaten soldier of his guards, who came to ask him leave that he might kill himself, taking notice of his withered body and decrepit motion, pleasantly answered, "Thou fanciest, then, that thou art yet alive."[3] Should a man fall into this condition on the sudden, I do not think humanity capable of enduring such a change: but nature, leading us by the hand, an easy and, as it were, an insensible pace, step by step conducts us to that miserable state, and by that means makes it familiar to us, so that we are insensible of the stroke when our youth dies in us, though it be really a harder death than the final dissolution

[1] *De Bello Gall.*, vii. 84.

[2] "Alas, to old men what portion of life remains."—Maximian, *vel* Pseudo-Gallus, i. 16.

[3] Seneca, *Ep.*, 77.

of a languishing body, than the death of old age; forasmuch as the fall is not so great from an uneasy being to none at all, as it is from a sprightly and flourishing being to one that is troublesome and painful. The body, bent and bowed, has less force to support a burden; and it is the same with the soul, and therefore it is, that we are to raise her up firm and erect against the power of this adversary. For, as it is impossible she should ever be at rest, whilst she stands in fear of it; so, if she once can assure herself, she may boast (which is a thing as it were surpassing human condition) that it is impossible that disquiet, anxiety, or fear, or any other disturbance, should inhabit or have any place in her:—

> "Non vultus instantis tyranni
> Mente quatit solida, neque Auster
> Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ,
> Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus."[1]

She is then become sovereign of all her lusts and passions, mistress of necessity, shame, poverty, and all the other injuries of fortune. Let us, therefore, as many of us as can, get this advantage; 'tis the true and sovereign liberty here on earth, that fortifies us wherewithal to defy violence and injustice, and to contemn prisons and chains:—

> "In manicis et
> Compedibus sævo te sub custode tenebo.
> Ipse Deus, simul atque volam, me solvet. Opinor,
> Hoc sentit; moriar; mors ultima linea rerum est."[2]

[1] "Not the menacing look of a tyrant shakes her well-settled soul, nor turbulent Auster, the prince of the stormy Adriatic, nor yet the strong hand of thundering Jove, such a temper moves."—Hor., *Od.*, iii. 3, 3.

[2] "I will keep thee in fetters and chains, in custody of a savage keeper.—The god himself, when I fly, will loose me. I think he feels this; I shall die. Death is the term of all things."—Hor., *Ep.*, i. 16, 76.

Our very religion itself has no surer human foundation than the contempt of death. Not only the argument of reason invites us to it—for why should we fear to lose a thing, which being lost, cannot be lamented?—but, also, seeing we are threatened by so many sorts of death, is it not infinitely worse eternally to fear them all, than once to undergo one of them? And what matters it, when it shall happen, since it is inevitable? To him that told Socrates, "The thirty tyrants have sentenced thee to death"; "And nature them," said he.[1] What a ridiculous thing it is to trouble ourselves about taking the only step that is to deliver us from all trouble! As our birth brought us the birth of all things, so in our death is the death of all things included. And therefore to lament that we shall not be alive a hundred years hence, is the same folly as to be sorry we were not alive a hundred years ago. Death is the beginning of another life. So did we weep, and so much it cost us to enter into this, and so did we put off our former veil in entering into it. Nothing can be a grievance that is but once. Is it reasonable so long to fear a thing that will so soon be despatched? Long life, and short, are by death made all one; for there is no long, nor short, to things that are no more. Aristotle tells us that there are certain little beasts upon the banks of the river Hypanis, that never live above a day: they which die at eight of the clock in the morning, die in their youth, and those that die at five in the evening, in their decrepitude[2]: which of us would not laugh to see this moment of continuance put into the consideration

[1] Socrates was not condemned to death by the thirty tyrants, but by the Athenians.—Diogenes Laertius, ii. 35.

[2] Cicero, *Tusc.*, i. 39.

of weal or woe? The most and the least, of ours, in comparison with eternity, or yet with the duration of mountains, rivers, stars, trees, and even of some animals, is no less ridiculous.[1]

But nature compels us to it. "Go out of this world," says she, "as you entered into it; the same pass you made from death to life, without passion or fear, the same, after the same manner, repeat from life to death. Your death is a part of the order of the universe, 'tis a part of the life of the world:—

"'Inter se mortales mutua vivunt
. . . . . .
Et, quasi cursores, vitaï lampada tradunt.'[2]

"Shall I exchange for you this beautiful contexture of things? 'Tis the condition of your creation; death is a part of you, and whilst you endeavour to evade it, you evade yourselves. This very being of yours that you now enjoy is equally divided betwixt life and death. The day of your birth is one day's advance towards the grave:—

"'Prima, quæ vitam dedit, hora carpsit.'[3]
"'Nascentes morimur, finisque ab origine pendet.'[4]

"All the whole time you live, you purloin from life, and live at the expense of life itself. The perpetual work of your life is but to lay the foundation of death. You are in death, whilst you are in life, because you still are after death, when you are no

[1] Seneca, *Consol. ad Marciam*, c. 20.
[2] "Mortals, amongst themselves, live by turns, and, like the runners in the games, give up the lamp, when they have won the race, to the next comer."—Lucretius, ii. 75, 78.
[3] "The first hour that gave us life took away also an hour."—Seneca, *Her. Fur.*, 3 Chor. 874.
[4] "As we are born we die, and the end commences with the beginning."—Manilius, *Ast.*, iv. 16.

more alive; or, if you had rather have it so, you are dead after life, but dying all the while you live; and death handles the dying much more rudely than the dead, and more sensibly and essentially. If you have made your profit of life, you have had enough of it; go your way satisfied:—

"'Cur non ut plenus vitæ conviva recedis?'[1]

"If you have not known how to make the best use of it, if it was unprofitable to you, what need you care to lose it, to what end would you desire longer to keep it?—

"'Cur amplius addere quæris,
Rursum quod pereat malè, et ingratum occidat omne?'[2]

"Life in itself is neither good nor evil; it is the scene of good or evil as you make it.[3] And, if you have lived a day, you have seen all: one day is equal and like to all other days. There is no other light, no other shade; this very sun, this moon, these very stars, this very order and disposition of things, is the same your ancestors enjoyed, and that shall also entertain your posterity:—

"'Non alium videre patres, aliumve nepotes
Aspicient.'[4]

"And, come the worst that can come, the distribution and variety of all the acts of my comedy are

[1] "Why not depart from life as a sated guest from a feast?"—Lucretius, iii. 951.

[2] "Why seek to add longer life, merely to renew ill-spent time, and be again tormented?"—Idem., *ibid.*, 914.

[3] Compare Shakespear, *Hamlet*, ii. 2:—

"*Ham.* Denmark's a prison.

"*Ros.* Then is the world one.

"*Ham.* A goodly one: in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one of the worst.

"*Ros.* We think not so, my lord.

"*Ham.* Why, then, it's none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

[4] "Your grandsires saw no other things, nor will your nephews."—Manilius, i. 529.

performed in a year. If you have observed the revolution of my four seasons, they comprehend the infancy, the youth, the virility, and the old age of the world: the year has played his part, and knows no other art but to begin again; it will always be the same thing:—

"'Versamur ibidem, atque insumus usque.'[1]
"'Atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus.'[2]

"I am not prepared to create for you any new recreations:—

"'Nam tibi præterea quod machiner, inveniamque
Quod placeat, nihil est; eadem sunt omnia semper.'[3]

"Give place to others, as others have given place to you. Equality is the soul of equity. Who can complain of being comprehended in the same destiny, wherein all are involved? Besides, live as long as you can, you shall by that nothing shorten the space you are to be dead; 'tis all to no purpose; you shall be every whit as long in the condition you so much fear, as if you had died at nurse:—

"'Licet quot vis vivendo vincere secla,
Mors æterna tamen nihilominus illa manebit.'[4]

"And yet I will place you in such a condition as you shall have no reason to be displeased:—

"'In vera nescis nullum fore morte alium te,
Qui possit vivus tibi te lugere peremptum,
Stansque jacentem.'[5]

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[1] "We are turning in the same circle, and are ever therein confined."—Lucretius, iii. 1093.

[2] "And the year revolves on itself in the same track."—Virgil, *Georg.*, ii. 402.

[3] "There is nothing besides that I can devise, nor find to please you: they are always the same things."—Lucretius, iii. 957.

[4] "You may live as many ages as you will, that everlasting death will nevertheless remain."—Idem., *ibid.*, 1103.

[5] "Know you not that, when dead, there can be no other living self to lament you dead, standing on your grave."—Idem., *ibid.*, 898.

"Nor shall you so much as wish for the life you are so concerned about:—

"'Nec sibi enim quisquam tum se vitamque requirit.[1]
. . . . . .
Nec desiderium nostri nos afficit ullum.'[2]

"Death is less to be feared than nothing, if there could be anything less than nothing:—

"'Multo . . . mortem minus ad nos esse putandum,[3]
Si minus esse potest, quam quod nihil esse videmus.'

"Neither can it any way concern you, whether you are living or dead: living, by reason that you are still in being; dead, because you are no more. Moreover, no one dies before his hour: the time you leave behind was no more yours than that was lapsed and gone before you came into the world; nor does it any more concern you:—

"'Respice enim, quam nil ad nos anteacta vetustas
Temporis æterni fuerit.'[4]

"Wherever your life ends, it is all there. The utility of living consists not in the length of days, but in the use of time; a man may have lived long, and yet lived but a little. Make use of time while it is present with you. It depends upon your will, and not upon the number of days, to have a sufficient length of life. Is it possible you can imagine never to arrive at the place towards which you are continually going? and yet there is no journey but hath its end. And, if company will make it more

[1] "No one then troubles himself about himself, or about life."—Lucretius, iii. 932.
[2] "Nor has any regret about himself."—Idem, *ibid.*, 935.
[3] "Death would seem much less to us—if indeed there could be less in that which we see to be nothing."—Idem, *ibid.*, 939.
[4] "Consider how as nothing to us is the old age of times past."—Idem, *ibid.*, 985.

pleasant or more easy to you, does not all the world go the self-same way?—

"'Omnia te, vitâ perfunctâ, sequentur.'[1]

"Does not all the world dance the same brawl that you do? Is there anything that does not grow old, as well as you? A thousand men, a thousand animals, a thousand other creatures, die at the same moment that you die:—

"'Nam nox nulla diem, neque noctem aurora sequuta est,
Quæ non audierit mistos vagitibus ægris
Floratus, mortis comites et funeris atri.'[2]

"To what end should you endeavour to draw back, if there be no possibility to evade it? you have seen examples enough of those who have been well pleased to die, as thereby delivered from heavy miseries; but have you ever found any who have been dissatisfied with dying? It must, therefore, needs be very foolish to condemn a thing you have neither experimented in your own person, nor by that of any other. Why dost thou complain of me and of destiny? Do we do thee any wrong? Is it for thee to govern us, or for us to govern thee? Though, peradventure, thy age may not be accomplished, yet thy life is: a man of low stature is as much a man as a giant; neither men nor their lives are measured by the ell. Chiron refused to be immortal, when he was acquainted with the conditions under which he was to enjoy it, by the god of time itself and its duration, his father Saturn. Do but seriously consider how much more insupportable and painful an immortal life would be

[1] "All things, then, life over, must follow thee."—Lucretius, iii. 981.
[2] "No night has followed day, no day has followed night, in which there has not been heard sobs and sorrowing cries, the companions of death and funerals."—Lucretius, v. 579.

to man than what I have already given him. If you had not death, you would eternally curse me for having deprived you of it; I have mixed a little bitterness with it, to the end, that seeing of what convenience it is, you might not too greedily and indiscreetly seek and embrace it: and that you might be so established in this moderation, as neither to nauseate life, nor have any antipathy for dying, which I have decreed you shall once do, I have tempered the one and the other betwixt pleasure and pain. It was I that taught Thales, the most eminent of your sages, that to live and to die were indifferent; which made him, very wisely, answer him, 'Why then he did not die?' 'Because,' said he, 'it is indifferent.'[1] Water, earth, air, and fire, and the other parts of this creation of mine, are no more instruments of thy life than they are of thy death. Why dost thou fear thy last day? it contributes no more to thy dissolution, than every one of the rest: the last step is not the cause of lassitude: it does not confess it. Every day travels towards death; the last only arrives at it." These are the good lessons our mother Nature teaches.

I have often considered with myself whence it should proceed, that in war the image of death, whether we look upon it in ourselves or in others, should, without comparison, appear less dreadful than at home in our own houses (for if it were not so, it would be an army of doctors and whining milksops), and that being still in all places the same, there should be, notwithstanding, much more assurance in peasants and the meaner sort of people, than in others of better quality. I believe, in truth, that it is those terrible ceremonies and preparations wherewith we set it out, that more

[1] Diogenes Laertius, i. 35.

terrify us than the thing itself; a new, quite contrary way of living; the cries of mothers, wives, and children; the visits of astounded and afflicted friends; the attendance of pale and blubbering servants; a dark room, set round with burning tapers; our beds environed with physicians and divines; in sum, nothing but ghostliness and horror round about us; we seem dead and buried already. Children are afraid even of those they are best acquainted with, when disguised in a visor; and so 'tis with us; the visor must be removed as well from things as from persons, that being taken away, we shall find nothing underneath but the very same death that a mean servant or a poor chambermaid died a day or two ago, without any manner of apprehension. Happy is the death that deprives us of leisure for preparing such ceremonials.[1]

CHAPTER XX

OF THE FORCE OF IMAGINATION

"Fortis imaginatio generat casum,"[2]

say scholars.

I am one of those who are most sensible of the power of imagination: every one is jostled by it, but some are overthrown by it. It has a very piercing impression upon me; and I make it my business to avoid, wanting force to resist it. I could live by the sole help of healthful and jolly company: the very sight of another's pain materially pains me, and I often usurp the sensations of

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 120. The original reads: "Heureuse la mort qui oste le loisir aux apprests de tel equipage."

[2] "A strong imagination begets the event itself."—*Axiom. Scholast.*

another person. A perpetual cough in another tickles my lungs and throat. I more unwillingly visit the sick in whom by love and duty I am interested, than those I care not for, to whom I less look. I take possession of the disease I am concerned at, and take it to myself. I do not at all wonder that fancy should give fevers and sometimes kill such as allow it too much scope, and are too willing to entertain it. Simon Thomas was a great physician of his time: I remember, that happening one day at Toulouse to meet him at a rich old fellow's house, who was troubled with weak lungs, and discoursing with the patient about the method of his cure, he told him, that one thing which would be very conducive to it, was to give me such occasion to be pleased with his company, that I might come often to see him, by which means, and by fixing his eyes upon the freshness of my complexion, and his imagination upon the sprightliness and vigour that glowed in my youth, and possessing all his senses with the flourishing age wherein I then was, his habit of body might, peradventure, be amended; but he forgot to say that mine, at the same time, might be made worse. Gallus Vibius so much bent his mind to find out the essence and motions of madness, that, in the end, he himself went out of his wits, and to such a degree, that he could never after recover his judgment, and might brag that he was become a fool by too much wisdom. Some there are who through fear anticipate the hangman; and there was the man, whose eyes being unbound to have his pardon read to him, was found stark dead upon the scaffold, by the stroke of imagination. We start, tremble, turn pale, and blush, as we are variously moved by imagination; and, being a-bed, feel our bodies

agitated with its power to that degree, as even sometimes to expiring. And boiling youth, when fast asleep, grows so warm with fancy, as in a dream to satisfy amorous desires :—

> "Ut, quasi transactis sæpe omnibu' rebu', profundant
> Fluminis ingentes, fluctus, vestemque cruentent."[1]

Although it be no new thing to see horns grown in a night on the forehead of one that had none when he went to bed, notwithstanding, what befell Cippus, King of Italy,[2] is memorable ; who having one day been a very delighted spectator of a bull-fight, and having all the night dreamed that he had horns on his head, did, by the force of imagination, really cause them to grow there. Passion gave to the son of Crœsus[3] the voice which nature had denied him. And Antiochus fell into a fever, inflamed with the beauty of Stratonice, too deeply imprinted in his soul.[4] Pliny pretends to have seen Lucius Cossitius, who from a woman was turned into a man upon her very wedding-day.[5] Pontanus and others report the like metamorphosis to have happened in these latter days in Italy. And, through the vehement desire of him and his mother :—

> "Dona puer solvit, quæ fœmina voverat, Iphis."[6]

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[1] Lucretius, iv. 1029. The sense of the citation is given in the preceding passage of the text.

[2] Val. Max., v. 6 ; Pliny, xi. 58. Cippus was not King of Italy, but a Roman prætor, whom divination had informed that if he returned to Rome he would become King of Italy, and he preferred to remain in exile.

[3] Herodotus, i. 85.

[4] Lucian, on the Syrian goddess.

[5] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, vii. 4.

[6] "Iphis, become a boy, paid the gifts which, as a woman, he had promised."—Ovid, *Met.*, ix. 793, and see the story, *ibid.*, 714.

Myself passing by Vitry le François,[1] saw a man the Bishop of Soissons had, in confirmation, called Germain, whom all the inhabitants of the place had known to be a girl till two-and-twenty years of age, called Mary. He was, at the time of my being there, very full of beard, old, and not married. He told us, that by straining himself in a leap his male organs came out; and the girls of that place have, to this day, a song, wherein they advise one another not to take too great strides, for fear of being turned into men, as Mary Germain was. It is no wonder if this sort of accident frequently happen; for if imagination have any power in such things, it is so continually and vigorously bent upon this subject, that to the end it may not so often relapse into the same thought and violence of desire, it were better, once for all, to give these young wenches the things they long for.

Some attribute the scars of King Dagobert and of St. Francis to the force of imagination. It is said, that by it bodies will sometimes be removed from their places; and Celsus tells us of a priest whose soul would be ravished into such an ecstasy that the body would, for a long time, remain without sense or respiration. St. Augustine makes mention of another,[2] who, upon the hearing of any lamentable or doleful cries, would presently fall into a swoon, and be so far out of himself, that it was in vain to call, bawl in his ears, pinch or burn him, till he voluntarily came to himself; and then he would say, that he had heard voices as it were afar off, and did feel when they pinched and burned him; and, to prove that this was no obstinate dissimulation in defiance of his sense of feeling, it was

[1] In September 1580, as related in his Travels.
[2] Restitutus. See *De Civit. Dei*, xiv. 24.

manifest, that all the while he had neither pulse nor breathing.

'Tis very probable, that visions, enchantments, and all extraordinary effects of that nature, derive their credit principally from the power of imagination, working and making its chiefest impression upon vulgar and more easy souls, whose belief is so strangely imposed upon, as to think they see what they do not see.

I am not satisfied whether those pleasant ligatures[1] with which this age of ours is so occupied, that there is almost no other talk, are not mere voluntary impressions of apprehension and fear; for I know, by experience, in the case of a particular friend of mine, one for whom I can be as responsible as for myself, and a man that cannot possibly fall under any manner of suspicion of insufficiency, and as little of being enchanted, who having heard a companion of his make a relation of an unusual frigidity that surprised him at a very unseasonable time; being afterwards himself engaged upon the same account, the horror of the former story on a sudden so strangely possessed his imagination, that he ran the same fortune the other had done; and from that time forward, the scurvy remembrance of his disaster running in his mind and tyrannising over him, he was subject to relapse into the same misfortune. He found some remedy, however, for this fancy in another fancy, by himself frankly confessing and declaring beforehand to the party with

[1] *Les nouements d'aiguillettes*, as they were called, knots tied by some one, at a wedding, on a strip of leather, cotton, or silk, and which, especially when passed through the wedding-ring, were supposed to have the magical effect of preventing a consummation of the marriage until they were untied. See Louandre, *La Sorcellerie*, 1853, p. 73. The same superstition and appliance existed in England.

whom he was to have to do, this subjection of his, by which means, the agitation of his soul was, in some sort, appeased; and knowing that, now, some such misbehaviour was expected from him, the restraint upon his faculties grew less. And afterwards, at such times as he was in no such apprehension, when setting about the act (his thoughts being then disengaged and free, and his body in its true and natural estate) he was at leisure to cause the part to be handled and communicated to the knowledge of the other party, he was totally freed from that vexatious infirmity. After a man has once done a woman right, he is never after in danger of misbehaving himself with that person, unless upon the account of some excusable weakness. Neither is this disaster to be feared, but in adventures, where the soul is over-extended with desire or respect, and, especially, where the opportunity is of an unforeseen and pressing nature; in those cases, there is no means for a man to defend himself from such a surprise, as shall put him altogether out of sorts. I have known some, who have secured themselves from this mischance, by coming half sated elsewhere, purposely to abate the ardour of the fury, and others, who, being grown old, find themselves less impotent by being less able; and one, who found an advantage in being assured by a friend of his, that he had a counter-charm of enchantments that would secure him from this disgrace. The story itself is not much amiss, and therefore you shall have it.

A Count of a very great family, and with whom I was very intimate, being married to a fair lady, who had formerly been courted by one who was at the wedding, all his friends were in very great fear;

but especially an old lady his kinswoman, who had the ordering of the solemnity, and in whose house it was kept, suspecting his rival would offer foul play by these sorceries. Which fear she communicated to me. I bade her rely upon me: I had, by chance, about me a certain flat plate of gold, whereon were graven some celestial figures, supposed good against sunstroke or pains in the head, being applied to the suture: where, that it might the better remain firm, it was sewed to a ribbon to be tied under the chin; a foppery cousin-german to this of which I am speaking. Jaques Pelletier,[1] who lived in my house, had presented this to me for a singular rarity. I had a fancy to make some use of this knack, and therefore privately told the Count, that he might possibly run the same fortune other bridegrooms had sometimes done, especially some one being in the house, who, no doubt, would be glad to do him such a courtesy: but let him boldly go to bed. For I would do him the office of a friend, and, if need were, would not spare a miracle it was in my power to do, provided he would engage to me, upon his honour, to keep it to himself; and only, when they came to bring him his caudle,[2] if matters had not gone well with him, to give me such a sign, and leave the rest to me. Now he had had his ears so battered, and his mind so prepossessed with the eternal tattle of this business, that when he came to't, he did really find himself tied with the trouble of his imagination, and, accordingly, at the time appointed, gave me the sign. Whereupon, I whispered him in the ear, that he should rise, under pretence of putting

[1] A celebrated physician, died 1582.

[2] A custom in France to bring the bridegroom a caudle in the middle of the night on his wedding-night.

us out of the room, and after a jesting manner pull my nightgown from my shoulders—we were of much about the same height—throw it over his own, and there keep it till he had performed what I had appointed him to do, which was, that when we were all gone out of the chamber, he should withdraw to make water, should three times repeat such and such words, and as often do such and such actions; that at every of the three times, he should tie the ribbon I put into his hand about his middle, and be sure to place the medal that was fastened to it, the figures in such a posture, exactly upon his reins, which being done, and having the last of the three times so well girt and fast tied the ribbon that it could neither untie nor slip from its place, let him confidently return to his business, and withal not forget to spread my gown upon the bed, so that it might be sure to cover them both. These ape's tricks are the main of the effect, our fancy being so far seduced as to believe that such strange means must, of necessity, proceed from some abstruse science: their very inanity gives them weight and reverence. And, certain it is, that my figures approved themselves more venereal than solar, more active than prohibitive. 'Twas a sudden whimsey, mixed with a little curiosity, that made me do a thing so contrary to my nature; for I am an enemy to all subtle and counterfeit actions, and abominate all manner of trickery, though it be for sport, and to an advantage; for though the action may not be vicious in itself, its mode is vicious.

Amasis, King of Egypt,[1] having married Laodice, a very beautiful Greek virgin, though noted for his abilities elsewhere, found himself quite another

[1] Herodotus, ii. 181.

man with his wife, and could by no means enjoy her; at which he was so enraged, that he threatened to kill her, suspecting her to be a witch. As 'tis usual in things that consist in fancy, she put him upon devotion, and having accordingly made his vows to Venus, he found himself divinely restored the very first night after his oblations and sacrifices. Now women are to blame to entertain us with that disdainful, coy, and angry countenance, which extinguishes our vigour, as it kindles our desire; which made the daughter-in-law of Pythagoras[1] say, "That the woman who goes to bed to a man, must put off her modesty with her petticoat, and put it on again with the same." The soul of the assailant, being disturbed with many several alarms, readily loses the power of performance; and whoever the imagination has once put this trick upon, and confounded with the shame of it (and she never does it but at the first acquaintance, by reason men are then more ardent and eager, and also, at this first account a man gives of himself, he is much more timorous of miscarrying), having made an ill beginning, he enters into such fever and despite at the accident, as are apt to remain and continue with him upon following occasions.

Married people, having all their time before them, ought never to compel or so much as to offer at the feat, if they do not find themselves quite ready: and it is less unseemly to fail of handselling the nuptial sheets, when a man perceives himself full of agitation and trembling, and to await another opportunity at more private and more composed leisure, than to make himself perpetually miserable, for having

[1] Theano, the lady in question, was the wife, not the daughter-in-law of Pythagoras. The same idea occurs in Herodotus, where he relates the story of Gyges.

misbehaved himself and been baffled at the first assault. Till possession be taken, a man that knows himself subject to this infirmity, should leisurely and by degrees make several little trials and light offers, without obstinately attempting at once, to force an absolute conquest over his own mutinous and indisposed faculties. Such as know their members to be naturally obedient, need take no other care but only to counterplot their fantasies.

The indocile liberty of this member is very remarkable, so importunately unruly in its tumidity and impatience, when we do not require it, and so unseasonably disobedient, when we stand most in need of it: so imperiously contesting in authority with the will, and with so much haughty obstinacy denying all solicitation, both of hand and mind. And yet, though his rebellion is so universally complained of, and that proof is thence deduced to condemn him, if he had, nevertheless, feed me to plead his cause, I should peradventure, bring the rest of his fellow-members into suspicion of complotting this mischief against him, out of pure envy at the importance and pleasure especial to his employment; and to have, by confederacy, armed the whole world against him, by malevolently charging him alone, with their common offence. For let any one consider, whether there is any one part of our bodies that does not often refuse to perform its office at the precept of the will, and that does not often exercise its function in defiance of her command. They have every one of them passions of their own, that rouse and awaken, stupefy and benumb them, without our leave or consent. How often do the involuntary motions of the countenance discover our inward thoughts, and betray our most private secrets to the bystanders.

The same cause that animates this member, does also, without our knowledge, animate the lungs, pulse, and heart, the sight of a pleasing object imperceptibly diffusing a flame through all our parts, with a feverish motion. Is there nothing but these veins and muscles that swell and flag without the consent, not only of the will, but even of our knowledge also? We do not command our hairs to stand on end, nor our skin to shiver either with fear or desire; the hands often convey themselves to parts to which we do not direct them; the tongue will be interdict, and the voice congealed, when we know not how to help it. When we have nothing to eat, and would willingly forbid it, the appetite does not, for all that, forbear to stir up the parts that are subject to it, no more nor less than the other appetite we were speaking of, and in like manner, as unseasonably leaves us, when it thinks fit. The vessels that serve to discharge the belly have their own proper dilatations and compressions, without and beyond our concurrence, as well as those which are destined to purge the reins; and that which, to justify the prerogative of the will, St. Augustine urges,[1] of having seen a man who could command his rear to discharge as often together as he pleased, Vives, his commentator, yet further fortifies with another example in his time, of one that could break wind in tune; but these cases do not suppose any more pure obedience in that part; for is anything commonly more tumultuary or indiscreet? To which let me add, that I myself knew one so rude and ungoverned, as for forty years together made his master vent with one continued and unintermitted outbursting, and 'tis like will do so till he die of it.

[1] *De Civit. Dei*, xiv. 24.

And I could heartily wish, that I only knew by reading, how often a man's belly, by the denial of one single puff, brings him to the very door of an exceeding painful death; and that the emperor,[1] who gave liberty to let fly in all places, had, at the same time, given us power to do it. But for our will, in whose behalf we prefer this accusation, with how much greater probability may we reproach herself with mutiny and sedition, for her irregularity and disobedience? Does she always will what we would have her to do? Does she not often will what we forbid her to will, and that to our manifest prejudice? Does she suffer herself, more than any of the rest, to be governed and directed by the results of our reason? To conclude, I should move, in the behalf of the gentleman, my client, it might be considered, that in this fact, his cause being inseparably and indistinctly conjoined with an accessory, yet he only is called in question, and that by arguments and accusations, which cannot be charged upon the other; whose business, indeed, it is sometimes inopportunely to invite, but never to refuse, and invite, moreover, after a tacit and quiet manner; and therefore is the malice and injustice of his accusers most manifestly apparent. But be it how it will, protesting against the proceedings of the advocates and judges, nature will, in the meantime, proceed after her own way, who had done but well, had she endowed this member with some particular privilege; the author of the sole immortal work of mortals; a divine work, according to Socrates; and love, the desire of immortality, and himself an immortal demon.

[1] The Emperor Claudius, who, however, according to Suetonius (*Vita*, c. 32), only intended to authorise this singular privilege by an edict.

Some one, perhaps, by such an effect of imagination may have had the good luck to leave behind him here, the scrofula, which his companion who has come after, has carried with him into Spain. And 'tis for this reason you may see why men in such cases require a mind prepared for the thing that is to be done. Why do the physicians possess, beforehand, their patients' credulity with so many false promises of cure, if not to the end, that the effect of imagination may supply the imposture of their decoctions? They know very well, that a great master of their trade has given it under his hand, that he has known some with whom the very sight of physic would work. All which conceits come now into my head, by the remembrance of a story was told me by a domestic apothecary of my father's, a blunt Swiss, a nation not much addicted to vanity and lying, of a merchant he had long known at Toulouse, who being a valetudinary, and much afflicted with the stone, had often occasion to take clysters, of which he caused several sorts to be prescribed him by the physicians, according to the accidents of his disease; which, being brought him, and none of the usual forms, as feeling if it were not too hot, and the like, being omitted, he lay down, the syringe advanced, and all ceremonies performed, injection alone excepted; after which, the apothecary being gone, and the patient accommodated as if he had really received a clyster, he found the same operation and effect that those do who have taken one indeed; and if at any time the physician did not find the operation sufficient, he would usually give him two or three more doses, after the same manner. And the fellow swore, that to save charges (for he paid as if he had really taken them) this sick man's wife, having sometimes made

trial of warm water only, the effect discovered the cheat, and finding these would do no good, was fain to return to the old way.

A woman fancying she had swallowed a pin in a piece of bread, cried and lamented as though she had an intolerable pain in her throat, where she thought she felt it stick; but an ingenious fellow that was brought to her, seeing no outward tumour nor alteration, supposing it to be only a conceit taken at some crust of bread that had hurt her as it went down, caused her to vomit, and, unseen, threw a crooked pin into the basin, which the woman no sooner saw, but believing she had cast it up, she presently found herself eased of her pain. I myself knew a gentleman, who having treated a large company at his house, three or four days after bragged in jest (for there was no such thing), that he had made them eat of a baked cat; at which, a young gentlewoman, who had been at the feast, took such a horror, that falling into a violent vomiting and fever, there was no possible means to save her. Even brute beasts are subject to the force of imagination as well as we; witness dogs, who die of grief for the loss of their masters; and bark and tremble and start in their sleep; so horses will kick and whinny in their sleep.

Now all this may be attributed to the close affinity and relation betwixt the soul and the body intercommunicating their fortunes; but 'tis quite another thing when the imagination works not only upon one's own particular body, but upon that of others also. And as an infected body communicates its malady to those that approach or live near it, as we see in the plague, the small-pox, and sore eyes, that run through whole families and cities:—

"Dum spectant oculi læsos, læduntur et ipsi;
Multaque corporibus transitione nocent."[1]

—so the imagination, being vehemently agitated, darts out infection capable of offending the foreign object. The ancients had an opinion of certain women of Scythia, that being animated and enraged against any one, they killed him only with their looks. Tortoises and ostriches hatch their eggs with only looking on them, which infers that their eyes have in them some ejaculative virtue. And the eyes of witches are said to be assailant and hurtful:—

"Nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos."[2]

Magicians are no very good authority with me. But we experimentally see that women impart the marks of their fancy to the children they carry in the womb; witness her that was brought to bed of a Moor; and there was presented to Charles the Emperor and King of Bohemia,[3] a girl from about Pisa, all over rough and covered with hair, whom her mother said to be so conceived by reason of a picture of St. John the Baptist, that hung within the curtains of her bed.

It is the same with beasts; witness Jacob's sheep, and the hares and partridges that the snow turns white upon the mountains. There was at my house, a little while ago, a cat seen watching a bird upon the top of a tree: these, for some time, mutually fixing their eyes one upon another, the bird at last let herself fall dead into the cat's claws, either

[1] "While they look at people with sore eyes, they themselves are affected; and many things are hurtful to our bodies by transition."—Ovid, *De Rem. Amor.*, 615.

[2] "I know not whose eye is bewitching my tender lambs."—Virgil, *Eclog.*, iii. 103.

[3] Charles IV. of Luxemburg, 1347–49.

dazzled by the force of its own imagination, or drawn by some attractive power of the cat. Such as are addicted to the pleasures of the field, have, I make no question, heard the story of the falconer, who having earnestly fixed his eyes upon a kite in the air, laid a wager that he would bring her down with the sole power of his sight, and did so, as it was said; for the tales I borrow I charge upon the consciences of those from whom I have them. The discourses are my own, and found themselves upon the proofs of reason, not of experience; to which every one has liberty to add his own examples; and who has none, let him not forbear, the number and varieties of accidents considered, to believe that there are plenty of them; if I do not apply them well, let some other do it for me. And, also, in the subject of which I treat, our manners and motions, testimonies and instances, how fabulous soever, provided they are possible, serve as well as the true; whether they have really happened or no, at Rome or Paris, to John or Peter, 'tis still within the verge of human capacity, which serves me to good use. I see, and make my advantage of it, as well in shadow as in substance; and amongst the various readings thereof in history, I cull out the most rare and memorable to fit my own turn. There are authors whose only end and design it is to give an account of things that have happened; mine, if I could arrive unto it, should be to deliver of what may happen. There is a just liberty allowed in the schools, of supposing similitudes, when they have none at hand. I do not, however, make any use of that privilege, and as to that matter, in superstitious religion, surpass all historical authority. In the examples which I here bring in, of what I have heard, read, done, or said, I have forbidden myself

to dare to alter even the most light and indifferent circumstances; my conscience does not falsify one tittle; what my ignorance may do, I cannot say.

And this it is that makes me sometimes doubt in my own mind, whether a divine, or a philosopher, and such men of exact and tender prudence and conscience, are fit to write history: for how can they stake their reputation upon a popular faith? how be responsible for the opinions of men they do not know? and with what assurance deliver their conjectures for current pay? Of actions performed before their own eyes, wherein several persons were actors, they would be unwilling to give evidence upon oath before a judge; and there is no man, so familiarly known to them, for whose intentions they would become absolute caution. For my part, I think it less hazardous to write of things past, than present, by how much the writer is only to give an account of things every one knows he must of necessity borrow upon trust.

I am solicited to write the affairs of my own time by some, who fancy I look upon them with an eye less blinded with passion than another, and have a clearer insight into them by reason of the free access fortune has given me to the heads of various factions; but they do not consider, that to purchase the glory of Sallust, I would not give myself the trouble, sworn enemy as I am to obligation, assiduity, or perseverance: that there is nothing so contrary to my style, as a continued narrative, I so often interrupt and cut myself short in my writing for want of breath; I have neither composition nor explanation worth anything, and am ignorant, beyond a child, of the phrases and even the very words proper to express the most common things; and for that reason it is, that I have under-

taken to say only what I can say, and have accommodated my subject to my strength. Should I take one to be my guide, peradventure I should not be able to keep pace with him; and in the freedom of my liberty might deliver judgments, which upon better thoughts, and according to reason, would be illegitimate and punishable. Plutarch would say of what he has delivered to us, that it is the work of others: that his examples are all and everywhere exactly true: that they are useful to posterity, and are presented with a lustre that will light us the way to virtue, is his own work. It is not of so dangerous consequence, as in a medicinal drug, whether an old story be so or so.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PROFIT OF ONE MAN IS THE LOSS OF ANOTHER

DEMADES the Athenian[1] condemned one of his city, whose trade it was to sell the necessaries for funeral ceremonies, upon pretence that he demanded unreasonable profit, and that that profit could not accrue to him, but by the death of a great number of people. A judgment that appears to be ill grounded, forasmuch as no profit whatever can possibly be made but at the expense of another, and that by the same rule he should condemn all gain of what kind soever. The merchant only thrives by the debauchery of youth, the husbandman by the dearness of grain, the architect by the ruin of buildings, lawyers and officers of justice by

[1] Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, vi. 38, whence nearly the whole of this chapter is taken.

the suits and contentions of men: nay, even the honour and office of divines are derived from our death and vices. A physician takes no pleasure in the health even of his friends, says the ancient Greek comic writer, nor a soldier in the peace of his country, and so of the rest.[1] And, which is yet worse, let every one but dive into his own bosom, and he will find his private wishes spring and his secret hopes grow up at another's expense. Upon which consideration it comes into my head, that nature does not in this swerve from her general polity: for physicians hold, that the birth, nourishment, and increase of every thing is the dissolution and corruption of another:—

> "Nam quodcumque suis mutatum finibus exit,
> Continuo hoc mors est illius, quod fuit ante."[2]

CHAPTER XXII

OF CUSTOM, AND OF NOT CHANGING A RECEIVED LAW

He[3] seems to me to have had a right and true apprehension of the power of custom, who first invented[4] the story of a country-woman who, having accustomed herself to play with and carry

[1] See Rousseau, *Emile*, book iii.

[2] "For, whatever from its own confines passes changed, this is at once the death of that which before it was."—Lucretius, ii. 752.

[3] Let us take Florio's rendering of this curious passage: "My opinion is, that he conveied aright of the force of custome, that first inuented this tale, how a countrey-woman, having enured herselfe to cherish and beare a young calfe in her armes, which continuing, shee got such a custome, that when he grew to be a great oxe, shee carried him still in her armes."—Edit. 1613, p. 46.

[4] Stobæus, *Serm.* xxix. This writer was formerly, and even after the time of Montaigne, in considerable vogue and credit: but he and some of the other authorities cited by the Essayist have betrayed the latter into strange statements throughout this and other papers.

a young calf in her arms, and daily continuing to do so as it grew up, obtained this by custom, that, when grown to be a great ox, she was still able to bear it. For, in truth, custom is a violent and treacherous schoolmistress. She, by little and little, slily and unperceived, slips in the foot of her authority, but having by this gentle and humble beginning, with the benefit of time, fixed and established it, she then unmasks a furious and tyrannic countenance, against which we have no more the courage or the power so much as to lift up our eyes. We see her, at every turn, forcing and violating the rules of nature :—

"Usus efficacissimus rerum omnium magister."[1]

I refer to her Plato's cave in his Republic, and the physicians, who so often submit the reasons of their art to her authority ; as the story of that king, who by custom brought his stomach to that pass, as to live by poison, and the maid that Albertus reports to have lived upon spiders. In that new world of the Indies, there were found great nations, and in very differing climates, who were of the same diet, made provision of them, and fed them for their tables ; as also, they did grasshoppers, mice, lizards, and bats ; and in a time of scarcity of such delicacies, a toad was sold for six crowns, all which they cook, and dish up with several sauces. There were also others found, to whom our diet, and the flesh we eat, were venomous and mortal :—

"Consuetudinis magna vis est : pernoctant venatores in nive : in montibus uri se patiuntur : pugiles, cæstibus contusi, ne ingemiscunt quidem."[2]

[1] "Custom is the best master of all things."—Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, xxvi. 2.

[2] "The power of custom is very great : huntsmen will lie out all night in the snow, or suffer themselves to be burned up by the sun on the mountains ; boxers, bruised by the cæstus, never utter a groan."—Cicero, *Tusc.*, ii. 17.

These strange examples will not appear so strange if we consider what we have ordinary experience of, how much custom stupefies our senses. We need not go to what is reported of the people about the cataracts of the Nile; and what philosophers believe of the music of the spheres, that the bodies of those circles being solid and smooth, and coming to touch and rub upon one another, cannot fail of creating a marvellous harmony, the changes and cadences of which cause the revolutions and dances of the stars; but that the hearing sense of all creatures here below, being universally, like that of the Egyptians, deafened, and stupefied with the continual noise, cannot, how great soever, perceive it.[1] Smiths, millers, pewterers, forgemen, and armourers could never be able to live in the perpetual noise of their own trades, did it strike their ears with the same violence that it does ours.[2]

My perfumed doublet gratifies my own scent at first; but after I have worn it three days together, 'tis only pleasing to the bystanders. This is yet more strange, that custom, notwithstanding long intermissions and intervals, should yet have the power to unite and establish the effect of its impressions upon our senses, as is manifest in such as live near unto steeples and the frequent noise of the bells. I myself lie at home in a tower, where every morning and evening a very great bell rings out the *Ave Maria*: the noise shakes my very

[1] Compare Shakespear, *Merchant of Venice*, v. i.:—

"*Lor.* . . . Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.
There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims."

[2] This passage is taken from Cicero, *Somnium Scipionis*; see his *De Republicâ*, vi. 11. The Egyptians were said to be stunned by the noise of the Cataracts.

tower, and at first seemed insupportable to me; but I am so used to it, that I hear it without any manner of offence, and often without awaking at it.[1]

Plato[2] reprehending a boy for playing at nuts, "Thou reprovest me," says the boy, "for a very little thing." "Custom," replied Plato, "is no little thing." I find that our greatest vices derive their first propensity from our most tender infancy, and that our principal education depends upon the nurse. Mothers are mightily pleased to see a child writhe off the neck of a chicken, or to please itself with hurting a dog or a cat; and such wise fathers there are in the world, who look upon it as a notable mark of a martial spirit, when they hear a son miscall, or see him domineer over a poor peasant, or a lackey, that dares not reply, nor turn again; and a great sign of wit, when they see him cheat and overreach his playfellow by some malicious treachery and deceit. Yet these are the true seeds and roots of cruelty, tyranny, and treason; they bud and put out there, and afterwards shoot up vigorously, and grow to prodigious bulk, cultivated by custom. And it is a very dangerous mistake to excuse these vile inclinations upon the tenderness of their age, and the triviality of the subject: first, it is nature that speaks, whose declaration is then more sincere, and inward thoughts more undisguised, as it is more weak and young; secondly, the deformity of cozenage does not consist nor depend upon the difference betwixt crowns and pins; but I rather hold it more just to conclude thus: why should he not cozen in crowns since he does it in pins, than as they do, who say they only play for

[1] On the contrary, to persons unused to such sounds they have proved healthy distractions.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, iii. 38. He whom Plato censured was not a boy playing at nuts, but a man throwing dice.

pins, they would not do it if it were for money? Children should carefully be instructed to abhor vices for their own contexture; and the natural deformity of those vices ought so to be represented to them, that they may not only avoid them in their actions, but especially so to abominate them in their hearts, that the very thought should be hateful to them, with what mask soever they may be disguised.

I know very well, for what concerns myself, that from having been brought up in my childhood to a plain and straightforward way of dealing, and from having had an aversion to all manner of juggling and foul play in my childish sports and recreations (and, indeed, it is to be noted, that the plays of children are not performed in play, but are to be judged in them as their most serious actions), there is no game so small wherein from my own bosom naturally, and without study or endeavour, I have not an extreme aversion from deceit. I shuffle and cut and make as much clatter with the cards, and keep as strict account for farthings, as it were for double pistoles; when winning or losing against my wife and daughter, 'tis indifferent to me, as when I play in good earnest with others, for round sums. At all times, and in all places, my own eyes are sufficient to look to my fingers; I am not so narrowly watched by any other, neither is there any I have more respect to.

I saw the other day, at my own house, a little fellow, a native of Nantes, born without arms, who has so well taught his feet to perform the services his hands should have done him, that truly these have half forgotten their natural office; and, indeed, the fellow calls them his hands; with them he cuts anything, charges and discharges a pistol, threads a needle, sews, writes, puts off his hat, combs his

head, plays at cards and dice, and all this with as much dexterity as any other could do who had more, and more proper limbs to assist him. The money I gave him—for he gains his living by shewing these feats—he took in his foot, as we do in our hand. I have seen another who, being yet a boy, flourished a two-handed sword, and, if I may so say, handled a halberd with the mere motions of his neck and shoulders for want of hands; tossed them into the air, and caught them again, darted a dagger, and cracked a whip as well as any coachman in France.

But the effects of custom are much more manifest in the strange impressions she imprints in our minds, where she meets with less resistance. What has she not the power to impose upon our judgments and beliefs? Is there any so fantastic opinion (omitting the gross impostures of religions, with which we see so many great nations, and so many understanding men, so strangely besotted; for this being beyond the reach of human reason, any error is more excusable in such as are not endued, through the divine bounty, with an extraordinary illumination from above), but, of other opinions, are there any so extravagant, that she has not planted and established for laws in those parts of the world upon which she has been pleased to exercise her power? And therefore that ancient exclamation was exceeding just:—

"Non pudet physicum, id est speculatorem venatoremque naturæ, ab animis consuetudine imbutis petere testimonium veritatis?"[1]

I do believe, that no so absurd or ridiculous

[1] "Is it not a shame for a natural philosopher, that is, for an observer and hunter of nature, to seek testimony of the truth from minds prepossessed by custom?"—Cicero, *De Naturâ Deor.*, i. 30.

fancy can enter into human imagination, that does not meet with some example of public practice, and that, consequently, our reason does not ground and back up. There are people, amongst whom it is the fashion to turn their backs upon him they salute, and never look upon the man they intend to honour. There is a place, where, whenever the king spits, the greatest ladies of his court put out their hands to receive it; and another nation, where the most eminent persons about him stoop to take up his ordure in a linen cloth. Let us here steal room to insert a story.

A French gentleman was always wont to blow his nose with his fingers (a thing very much against our fashion), and he justifying himself for so doing, and he was a man famous for pleasant repartees, he asked me, what privilege this filthy excrement had, that we must carry about us a fine handkerchief to receive it, and, which was more, afterwards to lap it carefully up, and carry it all day about in our pockets, which, he said, could not but be much more nauseous and offensive, than to see it thrown away, as we did all other evacuations. I found that what he said was not altogether without reason, and by being frequently in his company, that slovenly action of his was at last grown familiar to me; which nevertheless we make a face at, when we hear it reported of another country. Miracles appear to be so, according to our ignorance of nature, and not according to the essence of nature: the continually being accustomed to anything, blinds the eye of our judgment. Barbarians are no more a wonder to us, than we are to them; nor with any more reason, as every one would confess, if after having travelled over those remote examples, men could settle themselves to reflect upon, and rightly

to confer them, with their own. Human reason is a tincture almost equally infused into all our opinions and manners, of what form soever they are; infinite in matter, infinite in diversity. But I return to my subject.

There are peoples, where, his wife and children excepted, no one speaks to the king but through a tube. In one and the same nation, the virgins discover those parts that modesty should persuade them to hide, and the married women carefully cover and conceal them. To which, this custom, in another place, has some relation, where chastity, but in marriage, is of no esteem, for unmarried women may prostitute themselves to as many as they please, and being got with child, may lawfully take physic, in the sight of every one, to destroy their fruit. And, in another place, if a tradesman marry, all of the same condition, who are invited to the wedding, lie with the bride before him; and the greater number of them there is, the greater is her honour, and the opinion of her ability and strength: if an officer marry, 'tis the same, the same with a labourer, or one of mean condition; but then it belongs to the lord of the place to perform that office[1]; and yet a severe loyalty during marriage is afterward strictly enjoined. There are places where brothels of young men are kept for the pleasure of women; where the wives go to war as well as the husbands, and not only share in the dangers of battle, but, moreover, in the honours of command. Others, where they wear rings not only through their noses, lips, cheeks, and on their toes, but also weighty gimmals of gold thrust through their paps and buttocks; where, in eating, they wipe their fingers upon their

[1] The *Droit du Seigneur*, usually commuted by a fine.

thighs, genitories, and the soles of their feet: where children are excluded, and brothers and nephews only inherit; and elsewhere, nephews only, saving in the succession of the prince: where, for the regulation of community in goods and estates, observed in the country, certain sovereign magistrates have committed to them the universal charge and overseeing of the agriculture, and distribution of the fruits, according to the necessity of every one: where they lament the death of children, and feast at the decease of old men: where they lie ten or twelve in a bed, men and their wives together: where women, whose husbands come to violent ends, may marry again, and others not: where the condition of women is looked upon with such contempt, that they kill all the native females, and buy wives of their neighbours to supply their use; where husbands may repudiate their wives, without showing any cause, but wives cannot part from their husbands, for what cause soever; where husbands may sell their wives in case of sterility; where they boil the bodies of their dead, and afterward pound them to a pulp, which they mix with their wine, and drink it; where the most coveted sepulture is to be eaten by dogs, and elsewhere by birds; where they believe the souls of the blessed live in all manner of liberty, in delightful fields, furnished with all sorts of delicacies, and that it is these souls, repeating the words we utter, which we call Echo; where they fight in the water, and shoot their arrows with the most mortal aim, swimming; where, for a sign of subjection, they lift up their shoulders, and hang down their heads; where they put off their shoes when they enter the king's palace; where the eunuchs, who take charge of the sacred women, have, moreover, their lips and

noses cut off, that they may not be loved; where the priests put out their own eyes, to be better acquainted with their demons, and the better to receive their oracles; where every one makes to himself a deity of what he likes best; the hunter of a lion or a fox, the fisher of some fish; idols of every human action or passion; in which place, the sun, the moon, and the earth are the principal deities, and the form of taking an oath is, to touch the earth, looking up to heaven; where both flesh and fish is eaten raw; where the greatest oath they take is, to swear by the name of some dead person of reputation, laying their hand upon his tomb; where the new-year's gift the king sends every year to the princes, his vassals, is fire, which being brought, all the old fire is put out, and the neighbouring people are bound to fetch of the new, every one for themselves, upon pain of high treason; where, when the king, to betake himself wholly to devotion, retires from his administration (which often falls out), his next successor is obliged to do the same, and the right of the kingdom devolves to the third in succession: where they vary the form of government, according to the seeming necessity of affairs: depose the king when they think good, substituting certain elders to govern in his stead, and sometimes transferring it into the hands of the commonality: where men and women are both circumcised and also baptized: where the soldier, who in one or several engagements, has been so fortunate as to present seven of the enemies' heads to the king, is made noble: where they live in that rare and unsociable opinion of the mortality of the soul: where the women are delivered without pain or fear: where the women wear copper leggings upon both legs, and if a louse bite them, are bound

in magnanimity to bite them again, and dare not marry, till first they have made their king a tender of their virginity, if he please to accept it: where the ordinary way of salutation is by putting a finger down to the earth, and then pointing it up toward heaven: where men carry burdens upon their heads, and women on their shoulders; where the women make water standing, and the men squatting: where they send their blood in token of friendship, and offer incense to the men they would honour, like gods: where, not only to the fourth, but in any other remote degree, kindred are not permitted to marry: where the children are four years at nurse, and often twelve; in which place, also, it is accounted mortal to give the child suck the first day after it is born: where the correction of the male children is peculiarly designed to the fathers, and to the mothers of the girls; the punishment being to hang them by the heels in the smoke: where they circumcise the women: where they eat all sorts of herbs, without other scruple than of the badness of the smell: where all things are open—the finest houses, furnished in the richest manner, without doors, windows, trunks, or chests to lock, a thief being there punished double what they are in other places: where they crack lice with their teeth like monkeys, and abhor to see them killed with one's nails: where in all their lives they neither cut their hair nor pare their nails; and, in another place, pare those of the right hand only, letting the left grow for ornament and bravery: where they suffer the hair on the right side to grow as long as it will, and shave the other; and in the neighbouring provinces, some let their hair grow long before, and some behind, shaving close the rest: where parents let out their children, and husbands their

wives, to their guests to hire: where a man may get his own mother with child, and fathers make use of their own daughters or sons, without scandal: where, at their solemn feasts, they interchangeably lend their children to one another, without any consideration of nearness of blood. In one place, men feed upon human flesh; in another, 'tis reputed a pious office for a man to kill his father at a certain age; elsewhere, the fathers dispose of their children, whilst yet in their mothers' wombs, some to be preserved and carefully brought up, and others to be abandoned or made away. Elsewhere the old husbands lend their wives to young men; and in another place they are in common without offence; in one place particularly, the women take it for a mark of honour to have as many gay fringed tassels at the bottom of their garment, as they have lain with several men. Moreover, has not custom made a republic of women separately by themselves? has it not put arms into their hands, and made them raise armies and fight battles? And does she not, by her own precept, instruct the most ignorant vulgar, and make them perfect in things which all the philosophy in the world could never beat into the heads of the wisest men? For we know entire nations, where death was not only despised, but entertained with the greatest triumph; where children of seven years old suffered themselves to be whipped to death, without changing countenance; where riches were in such contempt, that the meanest citizen would not have deigned to stoop to take up a purse of crowns. And we know regions, very fruitful in all manner of provisions, where, notwithstanding, the most ordinary diet, and that they are most pleased with, is only bread, cresses, and water. Did not custom, moreover, work that

miracle in Chios that, in seven hundred years, it was never known that ever maid or wife committed any act to the prejudice of her honour?

To conclude; there is nothing, in my opinion, that she does not, or may not do; and therefore, with very good reason it is that Pindar calls her the ruler of the world.[1] He that was seen to beat his father, and reproved for so doing, made answer, that it was the custom of their family; that, in like manner, his father had beaten his grandfather, his grandfather his great-grandfather, "And this," says he, pointing to his son, "when he comes to my age, shall beat me." And the father, whom the son dragged and hauled along the streets, commanded him to stop at a certain door, for he himself, he said, had dragged his father no farther, that being the utmost limit of the hereditary outrage the sons used to practise upon the fathers in their family. It is as much by custom as infirmity, says Aristotle,[2] that women tear their hair, bite their nails, and eat coals and earth, and more by custom than nature that men abuse themselves with one another.

The laws of conscience, which we pretend to be derived from nature, proceed from custom; every one, having an inward veneration for the opinions and manners approved and received amongst his own people, cannot, without very great reluctance, depart from them, nor apply himself to them without applause. In times past, when those of Crete would curse any one, they prayed the gods to engage him in some ill custom.[3] But the principal

[1] Νόμος παντῶν βασιλεύς; Herodotus in citing these words (iii. 38), applies to νόμος the sense of custom, which is, to a considerable extent, the same thing, as the origin of the common law was general and recognised usage.

[2] *Nikomachean Ethics*, vii. 6.

[3] Val. Max., vii. 2, ext. 15.

effect of its power is, so to seize and ensnare us, that it is hardly in us to disengage ourselves from its gripe, or so to come to ourselves, as to consider of and to weigh the things it enjoins. To say the truth, by reason that we suck it in with our milk, and that the face of the world presents itself in this posture to our first sight, it seems as if we were born upon condition to follow on this track; and the common fancies that we find in repute everywhere about us, and infused into our minds with the seed of our fathers, appear to be the most universal and genuine; from whence it comes to pass, that whatever is off the hinges of custom, is believed to be also off the hinges of reason; how unreasonably for the most part, God knows.

If, as we who study ourselves have learned to do, every one who hears a good sentence, would immediately consider how it does in any way touch his own private concern, every one would find, that it was not so much a good saying, as a severe lash to the ordinary stupidity of his own judgment: but men receive the precepts and admonitions of truth, as directed to the common sort, and never to themselves; and instead of applying them to their own manners, do only very ignorantly and unprofitably commit them to memory. But let us return to the empire of custom.

Such people as have been bred up to liberty, and subject to no other dominion but the authority of their own will, look upon all other form of government as monstrous and contrary to nature. Those who are inured to monarchy do the same; and what opportunity soever fortune presents them with to change, even then, when with the greatest difficulties they have disengaged themselves from one master, that was troublesome and grievous to them,

they presently run, with the same difficulties, to create another; being unable to take into hatred subjection itself.

'Tis by the mediation of custom, that every one is content with the place where he is planted by nature; and the Highlanders of Scotland no more pant after Touraine, than the Scythians after Thessaly. Darius asking certain Greeks what they would take to assume the custom of the Indians, of eating the dead bodies of their fathers (for that was their use, believing they could not give them a better nor more noble sepulture than to bury them in their own bodies), they made answer, that nothing in the world should hire them to do it; but having also tried to persuade the Indians to leave their custom, and, after the Greek manner, to burn the bodies of their fathers, they conceived a still greater horror at the motion.[1] Every one does the same, for use veils from us the true aspect of things:—

> "Nil adeo magnum, nec tam mirabile quidquam
> Principio, quod non minuant mirarier omnes
> Paullatim."[2]

Taking upon me once to justify something in use amongst us, and that was received with absolute authority for a great many leagues round about us, and not content, as men commonly do, to establish it only by force of law and example, but inquiring still further into its origin, I found the foundation so weak, that I who made it my business to confirm others, was very near being dissatisfied myself. 'Tis by this receipt that Plato[3] undertakes to cure

[1] Herodotus, iii.38.

[2] "There is nothing at first so grand, so admirable, which by degrees people do not regard with less admiration."—Lucretius, ii. 1027.

[3] *Laws*, viii. 6.

the unnatural and preposterous loves of his time, as one which he esteems of sovereign virtue, namely, that the public opinion condemns them; that the poets, and all other sorts of writers, relate horrible stories of them; a recipe, by virtue of which the most beautiful daughters no more allure their fathers' lust; nor brothers, of the finest shape and fashion, their sisters' desire; the very fables of Thyestes, Œdipus, and Macareus, having with the harmony of their song, infused this wholesome opinion and belief into the tender brains of children. Chastity is, in truth, a great and shining virtue, and of which the utility is sufficiently known; but to treat of it, and to set it off in its true value, according to nature, is as hard as 'tis easy to do so according to custom, laws, and precepts. The fundamental and universal reasons are of very obscure and difficult research, and our masters either lightly pass them over, or not daring so much as to touch them, precipitate themselves into the liberty and protection of custom, there puffing themselves out and triumphing to their heart's content: such as will not suffer themselves to be withdrawn from this original source, do yet commit a greater error, and subject themselves to wild opinions; witness Chrysippus,[1] who, in so many of his writings, has strewed the little account he made of incestuous conjunctions, committed with how near relations soever.

Whoever would disengage himself from this violent prejudice of custom, would find several things received with absolute and undoubting opinion, that have no other support than the hoary head and rivelled face of ancient usage. But the

[1] Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhon. Hypotyp.*, i. 14. Montaigne probably used the Latin translation, published by H. Stephanus, 8vo., 1562.

mask taken off, and things being referred to the decision of truth and reason, he will find his judgment as it were altogether overthrown, and yet restored to a much more sure estate. For example, I shall ask him, what can be more strange than to see a people obliged to obey laws they never understood; bound in all their domestic affairs, as marriages, donations, wills, sales, and purchases, to rules they cannot possibly know, being neither written nor published in their own language, and of which they are of necessity to purchase both the interpretation and the use? Not according to the ingenious opinion of Isocrates,[1] who counselled his king to make the traffics and negotiations of his subjects, free, frank, and of profit to them, and their quarrels and disputes burdensome, and laden with heavy impositions and penalties; but, by a prodigious opinion, to make sale of reason itself, and to give to laws a course of merchandise. I think myself obliged to fortune that, as our historians report, it was a Gascon gentleman, a countryman of mine, who first opposed Charlemagne, when he attempted to impose upon us Latin and imperial laws.

What can be more savage, than to see a nation where, by lawful custom, the office of a judge is bought and sold, where judgments are paid for with ready money, and where justice may legitimately be denied to him that has not wherewithal to pay; a merchandise in so great repute, as in a government to create a fourth estate of wrangling lawyers, to add to the three ancient ones of the church, nobility, and people; which fourth estate, having the laws in their own hands, and sovereign power over men's lives and fortunes, makes another body separate

[1] *Discourse to Nicocles.*

from nobility: whence it comes to pass, that there are double laws, those of honour and those of justice, in many things altogether opposite one to another; the nobles as rigorously condemning a lie taken, as the other do a lie revenged: by the law of arms, he shall be degraded from all nobility and honour who puts up with an affront; and by the civil law, he who vindicates his reputation by revenge incurs a capital punishment: he who applies himself to the law for reparation of an offence done to his honour, disgraces himself; and he who does not, is censured and punished by the law. Yet of these two so different things, both of them referring to one head, the one has the charge of peace, the other of war; those have the profit, these the honour; those the wisdom, these the virtue; those the word, these the action; those justice, these valour; those reason, these force; those the long robe, these the short;—divided betwixt them.

For what concerns indifferent things, as clothes, who is there seeking to bring them back to their true use, which is the body's service and convenience, and upon which their original grace and fitness depend; for the most fantastic, in my opinion, that can be imagined, I will instance amongst others, our flat caps, that long tail of velvet that hangs down from our women's heads, with its party-coloured trappings; and that vain and futile model of a member we cannot in modesty so much as name, which, nevertheless, we make show and parade of in public. These considerations, notwithstanding, will not prevail upon any understanding man to decline the common mode; but, on the contrary, methinks, all singular and particular fashions are rather marks of folly and vain affectation than of sound reason, and that a wise man ought,

within, to withdraw and retire his soul from the crowd, and there keep it at liberty and in power to judge freely of things; but as to externals, absolutely to follow and conform himself to the fashion of the time. Public society has nothing to do with our thoughts, but the rest, as our actions, our labours, our fortunes, and our lives, we are to lend and abandon them to its service and to the common opinion, as did that good and great Socrates who refused to preserve his life by a disobedience to the magistrate, though a very wicked and unjust one: for it is the rule of rules, the general law of laws, that every one observe those of the place wherein he lives.

Νόμοις ἕπεσθαι τοῖσιν ἐγχωρίοις καλόν.[1]

And now to another point. It is a very great doubt, whether any so manifest benefit can accrue from the alteration of a law received, let it be what it will, as there is danger and inconvenience in altering it; forasmuch as government is a structure composed of divers parts and members joined and united together, with so strict connection, that it is impossible to stir so much as one brick or stone, but the whole body will be sensible of it. The legislator of the Thurians[2] ordained, that whosoever would go about either to abolish an old law, or to establish a new, should present himself with a halter about his neck to the people, to the end, that if the innovation he would introduce should not be approved by every one, he might immediately be hanged; and he of the Lacedæmonians employed his life to obtain from his citizens a faithful promise

[1] "It is good to obey the laws of one's country."—*Excerpta ex Trag. Græcis*, Grotio interp., 1626, p. 937. This was, no doubt, a book on the shelves of the author.

[2] Charondas; Diod. Sic., xii. 24.

that none of his laws should be violated.[1] The Ephoros who so rudely cut the two strings that Phrynis had added to music[2] never stood to examine whether that addition made better harmony, or that by its means the instrument was more full and complete; it was enough for him to condemn the invention, that it was a novelty, and an alteration of the old fashion. Which also is the meaning of the old rusty sword carried before the magistracy of Marseilles.[3]

For my own part, I have a great aversion from novelty, what face or what pretence soever it may carry along with it, and have reason, having been an eyewitness of the great evils it has produced. For those which for so many years have lain so heavy upon us, it is not wholly accountable; but one may say, with colour enough, that it has accidentally produced and begotten the mischiefs and ruin that have since happened, both without and against it; it, principally, we are to accuse for these disorders:—

"Heu! patior telis vulnera facta meis."[4]

They who give the first shock to a state, are almost naturally the first overwhelmed in its ruin; the fruits of public commotion are seldom enjoyed by him who was the first motor; he beats and disturbs the water for another's net. The unity and contexture of this monarchy, of this grand edifice, having been ripped and torn in her old age, by this thing called innovation, has since laid open a rent,

[1] Lycurgus; Plutarch, *in Vita*, c. 22.

[2] The Spartan Ephoros, or rather Ephori, are not supposed to have actually cut the two additional strings to the heptachord put by Phrynis of Mytilene. But the story is altogether mythical.

[3] Val. Max., ii. 6, 7.

[4] "Alas! I suffer the wounds made by my own weapons."—Ovid, *Ep. Phyll. Demophoonti*, vers. 48.

and given sufficient admittance to such injuries: the royal majesty with greater difficulty declines from the summit to the middle, then it falls and tumbles headlong from the middle to the bottom. But if the inventors do the greater mischief, the imitators are more vicious to follow examples of which they have felt and punished both the horror and the offence. And if there can be any degree of honour in ill-doing, these last must yield to the others the glory of contriving, and the courage of making the first attempt. All sorts of new disorders easily draw, from this primitive and ever-flowing fountain, examples and precedents to trouble and discompose our government: we read in our very laws, made for the remedy of this first evil, the beginning and pretences of all sorts of wicked enterprises; and that befalls us, which Thucydides said of the civil wars of his time,[1] that, in favour of public vices, they gave them new and more plausible names for their excuse, sweetening and disguising their true titles; which must be done, forsooth, to reform our conscience and belief:—

"Honesta oratio est"[2];

but the best pretence for innovation is of very dangerous consequence:—

"Adeo nihil motum ex antiquo probabile est."[3]

And freely to speak my thoughts, it argues a strange self-love and great presumption to be so fond of one's own opinions, that a public peace must be overthrown to establish them, and to introduce so many inevitable mischiefs, and so dreadful a corruption of manners, as a civil war and

[1] Book iii., c. 52.
[2] "Fine words truly."—Ter. *And.*, i. 1, 114.
[3] Livy, xxxiv. 54.

the mutations of state consequent to it, always bring in their train, and to introduce them, in a thing of so high concern, into the bowels of one's own country. Can there be worse husbandry than to set up so many certain and knowing vices against errors that are only contested and disputable? And are there any worse sorts of vices than those committed against a man's own conscience, and the natural light of his own reason? The Senate, upon the dispute betwixt it and the people about the administration of their religion, was bold enough to return this evasion for current pay:—

"Ad deos id magis, quam ad se, pertinere: ipsos visuros, ne sacra sua polluantur"[1];

according to what the oracle answered to those of Delphos who, fearing to be invaded by the Persians in the Median war, inquired of Apollo, how they should dispose of the holy treasure of his temple; whether they should hide, or remove it to some other place? He returned them answer, that they should stir nothing from thence, and only take care of themselves, for he was sufficient to look to what belonged to him.[2]

The Christian religion has all the marks of the utmost utility and justice: but none more manifest than the severe injunction it lays indifferently upon all to yield absolute obedience to the civil magistrate, and to maintain and defend the laws. Of which, what a wonderful example has the divine wisdom left us, that, to establish the salvation of mankind, and to conduct His glorious victory over death and sin, would do it after no other way, but at the mercy

[1] "That this belongs to the gods to determine rather than to them; let the gods, therefore, take care that their sacred mysteries be not profaned."—Livy, x. 6.

[2] Herodotus, viii. 36.

of our ordinary forms of justice subjecting the progress and issue of so high and so salutiferous an effect, to the blindness and injustice of our customs and observances; sacrificing the innocent blood of so many of His elect, and so long a loss of so many years, to the maturing of this inestimable fruit? There is a vast difference betwixt the case of one who follows the forms and laws of his country, and of another who will undertake to regulate and change them; of whom the first pleads simplicity, obedience, and example for his excuse, who, whatever he shall do, it cannot be imputed to malice; 'tis at the worst but misfortune:—

"Quis est enim, quem non moveat clarissimis monumentis testata consignataque antiquitas?"[1]

besides what Isocrates says,[2] that defect is nearer allied to moderation than excess: the other is a much more ruffling gamester; for whosoever shall take upon him to choose and alter, usurps the authority of judging, and should look well about him, and make it his business to discern clearly the defect of what he would abolish, and the virtue of what he is about to introduce.

This so vulgar consideration is that which settled me in my station, and kept even my most extravagant and ungoverned youth under the rein, so as not to burden my shoulders with so great a weight, as to render myself responsible for a science of that importance, and in this to dare, what in my better and more mature judgment, I durst not do in the most easy and indifferent things I had been

[1] "For who is there that antiquity, attested and confirmed by the fairest monuments, cannot move?"—Cicero, *De Divin.*, i. 40.

[2] Προς Νικολέα, p. 21. The oration for Nikokles, King of Cyprus, who gave Isocrates, according to Plutarch, twenty talents for it.

instructed in, and wherein the temerity of judging is of no consequence at all; it seeming to me very unjust to go about to subject public and established customs and institutions, to the weakness and instability of a private and particular fancy (for private reason has but a private jurisdiction), and to attempt that upon the divine, which no government will endure a man should do, upon the civil laws; with which, though human reason has much more commerce than with the other, yet are they sovereignly judged by their own proper judges, and the extreme sufficiency serves only to expound and set forth the law and custom received, and neither to wrest it, nor to introduce anything, of innovation. If, sometimes, the divine providence has gone beyond the rules to which it has necessarily bound and obliged us men, it is not to give us any dispensation to do the same; those are masterstrokes of the divine hand, which we are not to imitate, but to admire, and extraordinary examples, marks of express and particular purposes, of the nature of miracles, presented before us for manifestations of its almightiness, equally above both our rules and force, which it would be folly and impiety to attempt to represent and imitate; and that we ought not to follow, but to contemplate with the greatest reverence: acts of His personage, and not for us. Cotta very opportunely declares:—

"Quum de religione agitur, Ti. Coruncanium, P. Scipionem, P. Scævolam, pontifices maximos, non Zenonem, aut Cleanthem, aut Chrysippum, sequor."[1]

God knows, in the present quarrel of our civil war, where there are a hundred articles to dash out and

[1] "When it is a question of religion, I follow the high priests T. Coruncanius, P. Scipio, P. Scævola, not Zeno, Cleanthes, or Chrysippus."—Cicero, *De Naturâ Deor.*, iii. 2.

to put in, great and very considerable, how many there are who can truly boast, they have exactly and perfectly weighed and understood the grounds and reasons of the one and the other party; 'tis a number, if they make any number, that would be able to give us very little disturbance. But what becomes of all the rest, under what ensigns do they march, in what quarter do they lie? Theirs have the same effect with other weak and ill-applied medicines; they have only set the humours they would purge more violently in work, stirred and exasperated by the conflict, and left them still behind. The potion was too weak to purge, but strong enough to weaken us; so that it does not work, but we keep it still in our bodies, and reap nothing from the operation but intestine gripes and dolours.

So it is, nevertheless, that Fortune still reserving her authority in defiance of whatever we are able to do or say, sometimes presents us with a necessity so urgent, that 'tis requisite the laws should a little yield and give way; and when one opposes the increase of an innovation that thus intrudes itself by violence, to keep a man's self in so doing, in all places and in all things within bounds and rules against those who have the power, and to whom all things are lawful that may in any way serve to advance their design, who have no other law nor rule but what serves best to their own purpose, 'tis a dangerous obligation and an intolerable inequality:—

"Aditum nocendi perfido præstat fides,"[1]

forasmuch as the ordinary discipline of a healthful state does not provide against these extraordinary accidents; it presupposes a body that supports

[1] "Putting faith in a treacherous person, opens the door to harm." —Seneca, *Œdip.*, act iii., verse 686.

itself in its principal members and offices, and a common consent to its obedience and observation. A legitimate proceeding is cold, heavy, and constrained, and not fit to make head against a headstrong and unbridled proceeding. 'Tis known to be to this day cast in the dish of those two great men, Octavius and Cato, in the two civil wars of Sylla and Cæsar, that they would rather suffer their country to undergo the last extremities, than relieve their fellow-citizens at the expense of its laws, or be guilty of any innovation; for in truth, in these last necessities, where there is no other remedy, it would, peradventure, be more discreetly done, to stoop and yield a little to receive the blow, than, by opposing without possibility of doing good, to give occasion to violence to trample all under foot; and better to make the laws do what they can, when they cannot do what they would. After this manner did he[1] who suspended them for four-and-twenty hours, and he who, for once shifted a day in the calendar, and that other[2] who of the month of June made a second of May. The Lacedæmonians themselves, who were so religious observers of the laws of their country, being straitened by one of their own edicts, by which it was expressly forbidden to choose the same man twice to be admiral; and on the other side, their affairs necessarily requiring, that Lysander should again take upon him that command, they made one Aratus admiral, 'tis true, but withal, Lysander went general of the navy; and, by the same subtlety, one of their ambassadors being sent to the Athenians to obtain the revocation of some decree, and Pericles remonstrating to him, that it was forbidden to take away the tablet wherein a law had once been engrossed,

[1] Agesilaus. [2] Alexander the Great.

he advised him to turn it only, that being not forbidden; and Plutarch commends Philopœmen, that being born to command, he knew how to do it, not only according to the laws, but also to overrule even the laws themselves, when the public necessity so required.

CHAPTER XXIII

VARIOUS EVENTS FROM THE SAME COUNSEL

Jacques Amiot, grand almoner of France, one day related to me this story, much to the honour of a prince of ours (and ours he was upon several very good accounts, though originally of foreign extraction),[1] that in the time of our first commotions, at the siege of Rouen,[2] this prince, having been advertised by the queen-mother of a conspiracy against his life, and in her letters particular notice being given him of the person who was to execute the business (who was a gentleman of Anjou or of Maine, and who to this effect ordinarily frequented this prince's house), discovered not a syllable of this intelligence to any one whatever; but going the next day to the Mont Sainte Catherine,[3] from which our battery played against the town (for it was during the time of the siege), and having in company with him the said lord almoner, and another bishop, he saw this gentleman, who had been denoted to him, and presently sent for him; to whom, being come before him, seeing him already pale and trembling with the conscience of his guilt, he thus said, "Monsieur such an one,

[1] The Duc de Guise, surnamed Le Balafré.
[2] In 1562.
[3] An eminence outside Rouen overlooking the Seine.

you guess what I have to say to you; your countenance discovers it; 'tis in vain to disguise your practice, for I am so well informed of your business, that it will but make worse for you, to go about to conceal or deny it: you know very well such and such passages" (which were the most secret circumstances of his conspiracy), "and therefore be sure, as you tender your own life, to confess to me the whole truth of the design." The poor man seeing himself thus trapped and convicted (for the whole business had been discovered to the queen by one of the accomplices), was in such a taking, he knew not what to do; but, folding his hands, to beg and sue for mercy, he threw himself at his prince's feet, who taking him up, proceeded to say, "Come, sir; tell me, have I at any time done you offence? or have I, through private hatred or malice, offended any kinsman or friend of yours? It is not above three weeks that I have known you; what inducement, then, could move you to attempt my death?" To which the gentleman with a trembling voice replied, "That it was no particular grudge he had to his person, but the general interest and concern of his party, and that he had been put upon it by some who had persuaded him it would be a meritorious act, by any means, to extirpate so great and so powerful an enemy of their religion." "Well," said the prince, "I will now let you see, how much more charitable the religion is that I maintain, than that which you profess: yours has counselled you to kill me, without hearing me speak, and without ever having given you any cause of offence; and mine commands me to forgive you, convict as you are, by your own confession, of a design to kill me without reason.[1] Get you gone;

[1] Imitated by Voltaire. See Nodier, *Questions*, p. 165.

let me see you no more; and, if you are wise, choose henceforward honester men for your counsellors in your designs."[1]

The Emperor Augustus,[2] being in Gaul, had certain information of a conspiracy L. Cinna was contriving against him; he therefore resolved to make him an example; and, to that end, sent to summon his friends to meet the next morning in counsel. But the night between he passed in great unquietness of mind, considering that he was about to put to death a young man, of an illustrious family, and nephew to the great Pompey, and this made him break out into several passionate complainings. "What then," said he, "is it possible that I am to live in perpetual anxiety and alarm, and suffer my would-be assassin, meantime, to walk abroad at liberty? Shall he go unpunished, after having conspired against my life, a life that I have hitherto defended in so many civil wars, in so many battles by land and by sea? And after having settled the universal peace of the whole world, shall this man be pardoned, who has conspired not only to murder, but to sacrifice me?"—for the conspiracy was to kill him at sacrifice. After which, remaining for some time silent, he began again, in louder tones, and exclaimed against himself, saying: "Why livest thou, if it be for the good of so many that thou shouldst die? must there be no end of thy revenges and cruelties? Is thy life of so great value, that so many mischiefs must be done to preserve it?" His wife Livia, seeing him in this perplexity: "Will you take a woman's counsel?" said she. "Do as the physicians do, who, when the ordinary recipes will do no good, make trial of

[1] Dampmartin, *La Fortune de la Cour*, liv. ii., p. 139.
[2] This story is taken from Seneca, *De Clementiâ*, i. 9.

the contrary. By severity you have hitherto prevailed nothing; Lepidus has followed Salvidienus; Murena, Lepidus; Cæpio, Murena; Egnatius, Cæpio. Begin now, and try how sweetness and clemency will succeed. Cinna is convict; forgive him, he will never henceforth have the heart to hurt thee, and it will be an act to thy glory." Augustus was well pleased that he had met with an advocate of his own humour; wherefore, having thanked his wife, and, in the morning, countermanded his friends he had before summoned to council, he commanded Cinna all alone to be brought to him; who being accordingly come, and a chair by his appointment set him, having ordered all the rest out of the room, he spake to him after this manner: "In the first place, Cinna, I demand of thee patient audience; do not interrupt me in what I am about to say, and I will afterwards give thee time and leisure to answer. Thou knowest, Cinna,[1] that having taken thee prisoner in the enemy's camp, and thou an enemy, not only so become, but born so, I gave thee thy life, restored to thee all thy goods, and, finally, put thee in so good a posture, by my bounty, of living well and at thy ease, that the victorious envied the conquered. The sacerdotal office which thou madest suit to me for, I conferred upon thee, after having denied it to others, whose fathers have ever borne arms in my service. After so many obligations, thou hast undertaken to kill me." At which Cinna crying out that he was very far from entertaining any so wicked a thought: "Thou dost not keep thy

[1] This passage, borrowed from Seneca, has been paraphrased in verse by Corneille. See Nodier, *Questions de la Littérature légale*, 1828, pp. 7, 160. The monologue of Augustus in this chapter is also from Seneca. *Ibid.*, 164.

promise, Cinna," continued Augustus, "that thou wouldst not interrupt me. Yes, thou hast undertaken to murder me in such a place, on such a day, in such and such company, and in such a manner." At which words, seeing Cinna astounded and silent, not upon the account of his promise so to be, but interdict with the weight of his conscience: "Why," proceeded Augustus, "to what end wouldst thou do it? Is it to be emperor? Believe me, the Republic is in very ill condition, if I am the only man betwixt thee and the empire. Thou art not able so much as to defend thy own house, and but t'other day was baffled in a suit, by the opposed interest of a mere manumitted slave. What, hast thou neither means nor power in any other thing, but only to undertake Cæsar?[1] I quit the throne, if there be no other than I to obstruct thy hopes. Canst thou believe that Paulus, that Fabius, that the Cossii and the Servilii, and so many noble Romans, not only so in title, but who by their virtue honour their nobility, would suffer or endure thee?" After this, and a great deal more that he said to him (for he was two long hours in speaking), "Now go, Cinna, go thy way: I give thee that life as traitor and parricide, which I before gave thee in the quality of an enemy. Let friendship from this time forward begin betwixt us, and let us show whether I have given, or thou hast received thy life with the better faith"; and so departed from him. Some time after, he preferred him to the consular dignity, complaining that he had not the confidence to demand it; had him ever after for his very great friend, and was, at last, made by him sole heir to all his estate. Now, from the time of this accident

[1] The original has "à entreprendre César," Cæsar being here used in a generic or official sense.

which befell Augustus in the fortieth year of his age, he never had any conspiracy or attempt against him, and so reaped the due reward of this his so generous clemency. But it did not so happen with our prince, his moderation and mercy not so securing him, but that he afterwards fell into the toils of the like treason,[1] so vain and futile a thing is human prudence; throughout all our projects, counsels and precautions, Fortune will still be mistress of events.

We repute physicians fortunate when they hit upon a lucky cure, as if there was no other art but theirs that could not stand upon its own legs, and whose foundations are too weak to support itself upon its own basis; as if no other art stood in need of Fortune's hand to help it. For my part, I think of physic as much good or ill as any one would have me: for, thanks be to God, we have no traffic together. I am of a quite contrary humour to other men, for I always despise it; but when I am sick, instead of recanting, or entering into composition with it, I begin, moreover, to hate and fear it, telling them who importune me to take physic, that at all events they must give me time to recover my strength and health, that I may be the better able to support and encounter the violence and danger of their potions. I let nature work, supposing her to be sufficiently armed with teeth and claws to defend herself from the assaults of infirmity, and to uphold that contexture, the dissolution of which she flies and abhors. I am afraid, lest, instead of assisting her when close grappled and struggling with disease, I should assist her adversary, and burden her still more with work to do.

Now, I say, that not in physic only, but in other more certain arts, fortune has a very great part.

[1] The Duc de Guise was assassinated in 1563 by Poltrot.

The poetic raptures, the flights of fancy, that ravish and transport the author out of himself, why should we not attribute them to his good fortune, since he himself confesses that they exceed his sufficiency and force, and acknowledges them to proceed from something else than himself, and that he has them no more in his power than the orators say they have those extraordinary motions and agitations that sometimes push them beyond their design. It is the same in painting, where touches shall sometimes slip from the hand of the painter, so surpassing both his conception and his art, as to beget his own admiration and astonishment. But Fortune does yet more evidently manifest the share she has in all things of this kind, by the graces and elegances we find in them, not only beyond the intention, but even without the knowledge of the workman: a competent reader often discovers in other men's writings other perfections than the author himself either intended or perceived, a richer sense and more quaint expression.

As to military enterprises, every one sees how great a hand Fortune has in them. Even in our counsels and deliberations there must, certainly, be something of chance and good-luck mixed with human prudence; for all that our wisdom can do alone is no great matter; the more piercing, quick, and apprehensive it is, the weaker it finds itself, and is by so much more apt to mistrust itself. I am of Sylla's opinion[1]; and when I closely examine the most glorious exploits of war, I perceive, methinks, that those who carry them on make use of counsel and debate only for custom's sake, and leave the

[1] "Who freed his great deeds from envy by ever attributing them to his good fortune, and finally by surnaming himself Faustus, the Lucky."—Plutarch, *How far a Man may praise Himself*, c. 9.

best part of the enterprise to Fortune, and relying upon her aid, transgress, at every turn, the bounds of military conduct and the rules of war. There happen, sometimes, fortuitous alacrities and strange furies in their deliberations, that for the most part prompt them to follow the worst grounded counsels, and swell their courage beyond the limits of reason. Whence it happened that several of the great captains of old, to justify those rash resolutions, have been fain to tell their soldiers that they were invited to such attempts by some inspiration, some sign and prognostic.

Wherefore, in this doubt and uncertainty, that the short-sightedness of human wisdom to see and choose the best (by reason of the difficulties that the various accidents and circumstances of things bring along with them) perplexes us withal, the surest way, in my opinion, did no other consideration invite us to it, is to pitch upon that wherein is the greatest appearance of honesty and justice; and not, being certain of the shortest, to keep the straightest and most direct way; as in the two examples I have just given, there is no question but it was more noble and generous in him who had received the offence, to pardon it, than to do otherwise. If the former[1] miscarried in it, he is not, nevertheless, to be blamed for his good intention; neither does any one know if he had proceeded otherwise, whether by that means he had avoided the end his destiny had appointed for him; and he had, moreover, lost the glory of so humane an act.

You will read in history, of many who have been in such apprehension, that the most part have taken the course to meet and anticipate conspiracies against them by punishment and revenge; but I

[1] The Duc de Guise.

find very few who have reaped any advantage by this proceeding; witness so many Roman emperors. Whoever finds himself in this danger, ought not to expect much either from his vigilance or power; for how hard a thing is it for a man to secure himself from an enemy, who lies concealed under the countenance of the most assiduous friend we have, and to discover and know the wills and inward thoughts of those who are in our personal service. 'Tis to much purpose to have a guard of foreigners about one, and to be always fenced about with a pale of armed men; whosoever despises his own life, is always master of that of another man.[1] And moreover, this continual suspicion, that makes a prince jealous of all the world, must of necessity be a strange torment to him. Therefore it was, that Dion, being advertised that Callippus watched all opportunities to take away his life, had never the heart to inquire more particularly into it, saying, that he had rather die than live in that misery, that he must continually stand upon his guard, not only against his enemies, but his friends also[2]; which Alexander much more vividly and more roundly manifested in effect, when, having notice by a letter from Parmenio, that Philip, his most beloved physician, was by Darius' money corrupted to poison him, at the same time he gave the letter to Philip to read, drank off the potion he had brought him.[3] Was not this to express a resolution, that if his friends had a mind to despatch him out of the world, he was willing to give them opportunity to do it? This prince is, indeed, the sovereign pattern of hazardous actions; but I do not know whether there be another passage in his life wherein there

[1] Seneca, *Ep.*, 4.

[2] Plutarch, *Apothegms.*

[3] Quintus Curtius, iii. 6.

is so much firm courage as in this, nor so illustrious an image of the beauty and greatness of his mind.

Those who preach to princes so circumspect and vigilant a jealousy and distrust, under colour of security, preach to them ruin and dishonour: nothing noble can be performed without danger. I know a person, naturally of a very great daring and enterprising courage, whose good fortune is continually marred by such persuasions, that he keep himself close surrounded by his friends, that he must not hearken to any reconciliation with his ancient enemies, that he must stand aloof, and not trust his person in hands stronger than his own, what promises or offers soever they may make him, or what advantages soever he may see before him. And I know another, who has unexpectedly advanced his fortunes by following a clear contrary advice.

Courage, the reputation and glory of which men seek with so greedy an appetite, presents itself, when need requires, as magnificently in cuerpo, as in full armour; in a closet, as in a camp; with arms pendant, as with arms raised.

This over-circumspect and wary prudence is a mortal enemy to all high and generous exploits. Scipio, to sound Syphax's intention, leaving his army, abandoning Spain, not yet secure nor well settled in his new conquest, could pass over into Africa in two small ships, to commit himself, in an enemy's country, to the power of a barbarian king, to a faith untried and unknown, without obligation, without hostage, under the sole security of the grandeur of his own courage, his good fortune, and the promise of his high hopes[1]:—

"Habita fides ipsam plerumque fidem obligat."[2]

[1] Livy, xxviii. 17.

[2] "Faith reposed generally binds faith."—Livy, xxii. 22.

In a life of ambition and glory, it is necessary to hold a stiff rein upon suspicion: fear and distrust invite and draw on offence. The most mistrustful of our kings[1] established his affairs principally by voluntarily committing his life and liberty into his enemies' hands, by that action manifesting that he had absolute confidence in them, to the end they might repose as great an assurance in him. Cæsar only opposed the authority of his countenance and the haughty sharpness of his rebukes to his mutinous legions in arms against him:—

> "Stetit aggere fulti
> Cespitis, intrepidus vultu: meruitque timeri,
> Non metuens."[2]

But it is true, withal, that this undaunted assurance is not to be represented in its simple and entire form, but by such whom the apprehension of death, and the worst that can happen, does not terrify and affright; for to represent a pretended resolution with a pale and doubtful countenance and trembling limbs, for the service of an important reconciliation, will effect nothing to purpose. 'Tis an excellent way to gain the heart and will of another, to submit and intrust one's self to him, provided it appear to be freely done, and without the constraint of necessity, and in such a condition, that a man manifestly does it out of a pure and entire confidence in the party, at least, with a countenance clear from any cloud of suspicion. I saw, when I was a boy, a gentleman, who was governor of a great city, upon occasion of a popular commotion and fury, not knowing what other course to take, go out of a place of very great strength and security,

[1] Louis XI. See Commines, *Mém.*, lib. ii., c. 5-7.

[2] "He stood on a mound of banked-up turf, his countenance intrepid, and made himself feared, he fearing nothing."—Lucan, v. 316.

and commit himself to the mercy of the seditious rabble, in hopes by that means to appease the tumult before it grew to a more formidable head; but it was ill for him that he did so, for he was there miserably slain. But I am not, nevertheless, of opinion, that he committed so great an error in going out, as men commonly reproach his memory withal, as he did in choosing a gentle and submissive way for the effecting his purpose, and in endeavouring to quiet this storm, rather by obeying than commanding, and by entreaty rather than remonstrance; and I am inclined to believe, that a gracious severity, with a soldier-like way of commanding, full of security and confidence, suitable to the quality of his person, and the dignity of his command, would have succeeded better with him; at least, he had perished with greater decency and reputation. There is nothing so little to be expected or hoped for from this many-headed monster, in its fury, as humanity and good nature; it is much more capable of reverence and fear. I should also reproach him, that having taken a resolution (in my judgment rather brave than rash) to expose himself, weak and naked, in this tempestuous sea of enraged madmen, he ought to have stuck to his text, and not for an instant to have abandoned the high part he had undertaken; whereas, coming to discover his danger nearer hand, and his nose happening to bleed, he again changed that demiss and fawning countenance he had at first put on, into another of fear and amazement, filling his voice with entreaties and his eyes with tears, and, endeavouring so to withdraw and secure his person, that carriage more inflamed their fury, and soon brought the effects of it upon him.

It was upon a time intended that there should be

a general muster of several troops in arms (and that is the most proper occasion of secret revenges, and there is no place where they can be executed with greater safety), and there were public and manifest appearances, that there was no safe coming for some, whose principal and necessary office it was to review them. Whereupon a consultation was held, and several counsels were proposed, as in a case that was very nice and of great difficulty; and moreover of grave consequence. Mine, amongst the rest, was, that they should by all means avoid giving any sign of suspicion, but that the officers who were most in danger should boldly go, and with cheerful and erect countenances ride boldly and confidently through the ranks, and that instead of sparing fire (which the counsels of the major part tended to) they should entreat the captains to command the soldiers to give round and full volleys in honour of the spectators, and not to spare their powder. This was accordingly done, and served so good use, as to please and gratify the suspected troops, and thenceforward to beget a mutual and wholesome confidence and intelligence amongst them.

I look upon Julius Cæsar's way of winning men to him as the best and finest that can be put in practice. First, he tried by clemency to make himself beloved even by his very enemies, contenting himself, in detected conspiracies, only publicly to declare, that he was pre-acquainted with them; which being done, he took a noble resolution to await without solicitude or fear, whatever might be the event, wholly resigning himself to the protection of the gods and fortune: for, questionless, in this state he was at the time when he was killed.

A stranger having publicly said, that he could

teach Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, an infallible way to find out and discover all the conspiracies his subjects could contrive against him, if he would give him a good sum of money for his pains, Dionysius hearing of it, caused the man to be brought to him, that he might learn an art so necessary to his preservation. The man made answer, that all the art he knew, was, that he should give him a talent, and afterwards boast that he had obtained a singular secret from him. Dionysius liked the invention, and accordingly caused six hundred crowns to be counted out to him.[1] It was not likely he should give so great a sum to a person unknown, but upon the account of some extraordinary discovery, and the belief of this served to keep his enemies in awe. Princes, however, do wisely to publish the informations they receive of all the practices against their lives, to possess men with an opinion they have so good intelligence that nothing can be plotted against them, but they have present notice of it. The Duke of Athens[2] did a great many foolish things in the establishment of his new tyranny over Florence: but this especially was most notable, that having received the first intimation of the conspiracies the people were hatching against him, from Matteo di Morozzo, one of the conspirators, he presently put him to death, to suppress that rumour, that it might not be thought any of the city disliked his government.

I remember I have formerly read a story[3] of some Roman of great quality who, flying the

[1] Plutarch, *Apothegms*.

[2] Gualtier de Brienne, Duke of Athens, made Prince of Florence for life in 1342, but dethroned same year.

[3] Appian of Alexandria, Ἐμφύλια, book iv.

tyranny of the Triumvirate, had a thousand times by the subtlety of as many inventions escaped from falling into the hands of those that pursued him. It happened one day that a troop of horse, which was sent out to take him, passed close by a brake where he was squat, and missed very narrowly of spying him: but he considering, at this point, the pains and difficulties wherein he had so long continued to evade the strict and incessant searches that were every day made for him, the little pleasure he could hope for in such a kind of life, and how much better it was for him to die once for all, than to be perpetually at this pass, he started from his seat, called them back, showed them his form,[1] and voluntarily delivered himself up to their cruelty, by that means to free both himself and them from further trouble. To invite a man's enemies to come and cut his throat, seems a resolution a little extravagant and odd; and yet I think he did better to take that course, than to live in continual feverish fear of an accident for which there was no cure. But seeing all the remedies a man can apply to such a disease, are full of unquietness and uncertainty, 'tis better with a manly courage to prepare one's self for the worst that can happen, and to extract some consolation from this, that we are not certain the thing we fear will ever come to pass.

CHAPTER XXIV

OF PEDANTRY

I was often, when a boy, wonderfully concerned to see, in the Italian farces, a pedant always brought in

[1] *i.e.* as of a squatting hare.

for the fool of the play, and that the title of Magister was in no greater reverence amongst us: for being delivered up to their tuition, what could I do less than be jealous of their honour and reputation? I sought indeed to excuse them by the natural incompatibility betwixt the vulgar sort and men of a finer thread, both in judgment and knowledge, forasmuch as they go a quite contrary way to one another: but in this, the thing I most stumbled at was, that the finest gentlemen were those who most despised them; witness our famous poet Du Bellay—

"Mais je hay par sur tout un sçavoir pedantesque."[1]

And 'twas so in former times; for Plutarch says that Greek and Scholar were terms of reproach and contempt amongst the Romans. But since, with the better experience of age, I find they had very great reason so to do, and that—

"Magis magnos clericos non sunt magis magnos sapientes."[2]

But whence it should come to pass, that a mind enriched with the knowledge of so many things should not become more quick and sprightly, and that a gross and vulgar understanding should lodge within it, without correcting and improving itself, all the discourses and judgments of the greatest minds the world ever had, I am yet to seek. To admit so many foreign conceptions, so great, and so high fancies, it is necessary (as a young lady, one of the greatest princesses of the kingdom, said to me once, speaking of a certain person) that a man's own brain must be crowded and squeezed together into a less compass, to make room for the

[1] "But above all things I hate pedantic learning."—Du Bellay.
[2] "The greatest clerks are not the wisest men." A proverb given in Rabelais' *Gargantua*, i. 39.

others; I should be apt to conclude, that as plants are suffocated and drowned with too much nourishment, and lamps with too much oil, so with too much study and matter is the active part of the understanding which, being embarrassed, and confounded with a great diversity of things, loses the force and power to disengage itself, and by the pressure of this weight, is bowed, subjected, and doubled up. But it is quite otherwise; for our soul stretches and dilates itself proportionably as it fills; and in the examples of elder times, we see, quite contrary, men very proper for public business, great captains, and great statesmen very learned withal.

And, as to the philosophers, a sort of men remote from all public affairs, they have been sometimes also despised by the comic liberty of their times; their opinions and manners making them appear, to men of another sort, ridiculous. Would you make them judges of a lawsuit, of the actions of men? they are ready to take it upon them, and straight begin to examine if there be life, if there be motion, if man be any other than an ox[1]; what it is to do and to suffer? what animals law and justice are? Do they speak of the magistrates, or to him, 'tis with a rude, irreverent, and indecent liberty. Do they hear their prince, or a king commended? they make no more of him, than of a shepherd, goatherd, or neatherd: a lazy Coridon, occupied in milking and shearing his herds and flocks, but more rudely and harshly than the herd or shepherd

[1] "If Montaigne has copied all this from Plato's *Theatetes*, p. 127, F. as it is plain by all which he has added immediately after, that he has taken it from that dialogue), he has grossly mistaken Plato's sentiment, who says here no more than this, that the philosopher is so ignorant of what his neighbour does, that he scarce knows whether he is a man, or some other animal: *τὸν τοίουτον ὁ μὲν πλησίον καὶ ὁ γείτων λέληθεν, οὐ μονὸν ὅτι πεαττει, ἀλλὰ λίγου καὶ εἰ ἀνθρωπος ἐστιν ἤ τι ἄλλο θρέμμα.*"—Coste.

himself. Do you repute any man the greater for being lord of two thousand acres of land? they laugh at such a pitiful pittance, as laying claim themselves to the whole world for their possession. Do you boast of your nobility, as being descended from seven rich successive ancestors? they look upon you with an eye of contempt, as men who have not a right idea of the universal image of nature, and that do not consider how many predecessors every one of us has had, rich, poor, kings, slaves, Greeks, and barbarians; and though you were the fiftieth descendant from Hercules, they look upon it as a great vanity, so highly to value this, which is only a gift of fortune. And 'twas so the vulgar sort contemned them, as men ignorant of the most elementary and ordinary things; as presumptuous and insolent.[1]

But this Platonic picture is far different from that these pedants are presented by. Those were envied for raising themselves above the common sort, for despising the ordinary actions and offices of life, for having assumed a particular and inimitable way of living, and for using a certain method of high-flight and obsolete language, quite different from the ordinary way of speaking: but these are contemned as being as much below the usual form, as incapable of public employment, as leading a life and conforming themselves to the mean and vile manners of the vulgar:—

"Odi ignava opera, philosopha[s] sententia[s]."[2]

For what concerns the philosophers, as I have said, if they were in science, they were yet much greater in action. And, as it is said of the geometrician

[1] See preceding note.

[2] "I hate idle works, philosophical utterances."—Pacuvius ap. Gellium, xiii. 8. The text in Gellius seems to be faulty.

of Syracuse,[1] who having been disturbed from his contemplation, to put some of his skill in practice for the defence of his country, that he suddenly set on foot dreadful and prodigious engines, that wrought effects beyond all human expectation; himself, notwithstanding, disdaining all his handiwork, and thinking in this he had played the mere mechanic, and violated the dignity of his art, of which these performances of his he accounted but trivial experiments and playthings: so they, whenever they have been put upon the proof of action, have been seen to fly to so high a pitch, as made it very well appear, their souls were marvellously elevated, and enriched by the knowledge of things. But some of them, seeing the reins of government in the hands of incapable men, have avoided all management of political affairs; and he who demanded of Crates, how long it was necessary to philosophise, received this answer: "Till our armies are no more commanded by fools."[2] Heraclitus resigned the royalty to his brother; and, to the Ephesians, who reproached him that he spent his time in playing with children before the temple: "Is it not better," said he, "to do so, than to sit at the helm of affairs in your company?"[3] Others having their imagination advanced above the world and fortune, have looked upon the tribunals of justice, and even the thrones of kings, as paltry and contemptible; insomuch, that Empedocles refused the royalty that the Agrigentines offered to him.[4] Thales, once inveighing in discourse against the pains and care men put themselves to to become rich, was answered by one in the company, that he did like the fox, who found fault

[1] Archimedes.
[2] Diogenes Laertius, vi. 92.
[3] Idem, ix. 63.
[4] Idem, Empedocles, viii. 63.

with what he could not obtain. Whereupon, he had a mind, for the jest's sake, to show them to the contrary; and having, for this occasion, made a muster of all his wits, wholly to employ them in the service of profit and gain, he set a traffic on foot, which in one year brought him in so great riches, that the most experienced in that trade could hardly in their whole lives, with all their industry, have raked so much together.[1] That which Aristotle reports of some who called both him and Anaxagoras, and others of their profession, wise but not prudent, in not applying their study to more profitable things —though I do not well digest this verbal distinction— that will not, however, serve to excuse my pedants, for to see the low and necessitous fortune wherewith they are content, we have rather reason to pronounce that they are neither wise nor prudent.

But letting this first reason alone, I think it better to say, that this evil proceeds from their applying themselves the wrong way to the study of the sciences; and that, after the manner we are instructed, it is no wonder if neither the scholars nor the masters become, though more learned, ever the wiser, or more able. In plain truth, the cares and expense our parents are at in our education, point at nothing, but to furnish our heads with knowledge; but not a word of judgment and virtue. Cry out, of one that passes by, to the people: "O, what a learned man!" and of another, "O, what a good man!"[2] they will not fail to turn their eyes, and address their respect to the former. There should then be a third crier, "O, the blockheads!" Men are apt presently to inquire, does such a one understand Greek or Latin? Is he a poet? or does he write in

[1] Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Thales*, i. 26; Cicero, *De Divin.*, i. 49.
[2] Translated from Seneca, *Ep.*, 88.

prose? But whether he be grown better or more discreet, which are qualities of principal concern, these are never thought of. We should rather examine, who is better learned, than who is more learned.

We only labour to stuff the memory, and leave the conscience and the understanding unfurnished and void. Like birds who fly abroad to forage for grain, and bring it home in the beak, without tasting it themselves, to feed their young; so our pedants go picking knowledge here and there, out of books, and hold it at the tongue's end, only to spit it out and distribute it abroad. And here I cannot but smile to think how I have paid myself in showing the foppery of this kind of learning, who myself am so manifest an example; for, do I not the same thing throughout almost this whole composition? I go here and there, culling out of several books the sentences that best please me, not to keep them (for I have no memory to retain them in), but to transplant them into this; where, to say the truth, they are no more mine than in their first places. We are, I conceive, knowing only in present knowledge, and not at all in what is past, or more than in that which is to come. But the worst on't is, their scholars and pupils are no better nourished by this kind of inspiration; and it makes no deeper impression upon them, but passes from hand to hand, only to make a show to be tolerable company, and to tell pretty stories, like a counterfeit coin in counters, of no other use or value, but to reckon with, or to set up at cards:—

"Apud alios loqui didicerunt non ipsi secum."[1]

"Non est loquendum, sed gubernandum."[2]

[1] "They have learned to speak among others, not with themselves."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæ.*, v. 36.

[2] "We have not to talk, but to govern;"—Seneca, *Ep.*, 108.

Nature, to shew that there is nothing barbarous where she has the sole conduct, oftentimes in nations where art has the least to do, causes productions of wit, such as may rival the greatest effect of art whatever. In relation to what I am now speaking of the Gascon proverb, derived from a cornpipe, is very quaint and subtle:—

"Bouha prou bouha, mas à remuda lous dits quem."[1]

We can say, Cicero says thus; these were the manners of Plato; these are the very words of Aristotle: but what do we say ourselves? What do we judge? A parrot would say as much as that.

And this puts me in mind of that rich gentleman of Rome,[2] who had been solicitous, with very great expense, to procure men that were excellent in all sorts of science, whom he had always attending his person, to the end, that when amongst his friends any occasion fell out of speaking of any subject whatsoever, they might supply his place, and be ready to prompt him, one with a sentence of Seneca, another with a verse of Homer, and so forth, every one according to his talent; and he fancied this knowledge to be his own, because it was in the heads of those who lived upon his bounty; as they also do, whose learning consists in having noble libraries. I know one, who, when I question him what he knows, he presently calls for a book to shew me, and dares not venture to tell me so much, as that he has piles in his posteriors, till first he has consulted his dictionary, what piles and what posteriors are.

We take other men's knowledge and opinions upon trust: which is an idle and superficial learning.

[1] "You may blow till your eyes start out; but if once you offer to stir your fingers, it is all over."

[2] Calvisius Sabinus. Seneca, *Ep.*, 27.

We must make it our own. We are in this very like him, who having need of fire, went to a neighbour's house to fetch it, and finding a very good one there, sat down to warm himself without remembering to carry any with him home.[1] What good does it do us to have the stomach full of meat, if it do not digest, if it be not incorporated with us, if it does not nourish and support us? Can we imagine that Lucullus, whom letters, without any manner of experience, made so great a captain, learned to be so after this perfunctory manner?[2] We suffer ourselves to lean and rely so strongly upon the arm of another, that we destroy our own strength and vigour. Would I fortify myself against the fear of death, it must be at the expense of Seneca: would I extract consolation for myself or my friend, I borrow it from Cicero. I might have found it in myself, had I been trained to make use of my own reason. I do not like this relative and mendicant understanding; for though we could become learned by other men's learning, a man can never be wise but by his own wisdom:—

Μισῶ σοφιστὴν, ὅστις οὐχ ἀυτῷ σοφός.[3]

Whence Ennius:—

"Nequidquam sapere sapientem, qui ipse sibi prodesse non quiret."[4]

"Si cupidus, si
Vanus, et Euganea quantumvis mollior agna."[5]

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[1] Plutarch, *How a Man should Listen.*

[2] Cicero, *Acad.*, ii. 1.

[3] "I hate the wise man, who in his own concern is not wise."—Euripides, ap. Cicero, *Ep. Fam.*, xiii. 15.

[4] "That wise man knows nothing, who cannot profit himself by his wisdom."—Cicero, *De Offic.*, iii. 15.

[5] "If he be grasping, or a boaster, and something softer than an Euganean lamb."—Juvenal, *Sat.*, viii. 14.

"Non enim paranda nobis solum, sed fruenda sapientia est."[1]

Dionysius[2] laughed at the grammarians, who set themselves to inquire into the miseries of Ulysses, and were ignorant of their own; at musicians, who were so exact in tuning their instruments, and never tuned their manners; at orators, who made it a study to declare what is justice, but never took care to do it. If the mind be not better disposed, if the judgment be no better settled, I had much rather my scholar had spent his time at tennis, for, at least, his body would by that means be in better exercise and breath. Do but observe him when he comes back from school, after fifteen or sixteen years that he has been there; there is nothing so unfit for employment; all you shall find he has got, is, that his Latin and Greek have only made him a greater coxcomb than when he went from home. He should bring back his soul replete with good literature, and he brings it only swelled and puffed up with vain and empty shreds and patches of learning; and has really nothing more in him than he had before.[3]

These pedants of ours, as Plato says of the Sophists, their cousin-germans, are, of all men, they who most pretend to be useful to mankind, and who alone, of all men, not only do not better and improve that which is committed to them, as a carpenter or a mason would do, but make them much worse, and make us pay them for making them worse, to boot. If the rule which Protagoras

[1] "For wisdom is not only to be acquired, but to be utilised."—Cicero, *De Finib.*, i. 1.

[2] It was not Dionysius, but Diogenes the cynic. Diogenes Laertius, vi. 27.

[3] Plato's *Dialogues: Protagoras.*

proposed to his pupils were followed—either that they should give him his own demand, or make affidavit upon oath in the temple how much they valued the profit they had received under his tuition, and satisfy him accordingly—my pedagogues would find themselves sorely gravelled, if they were to be judged by the affidavits of my experience. My Perigordin patois very pleasantly calls these pretenders to learning, *lettre-ferits*, as a man should say, letter-marked—men on whom letters have been stamped by the blow of a mallet. And, in truth, for the most part, they appear to be deprived even of common sense; for you see the husbandman and the cobbler go simply and fairly about their business, speaking only of what they know and understand; whereas these fellows, to make parade and to get opinion, mustering this ridiculous knowledge of theirs, that floats on the superficies of the brain, are perpetually perplexing and entangling themselves in their own nonsense. They speak fine words sometimes, 'tis true, but let somebody that is wiser apply them. They are wonderfully well acquainted with Galen, but not at all with the disease of the patient; they have already deafened you with a long ribble-row of laws, but understand nothing of the case in hand; they have the theory of all things, let who will put it in practice.

I have sat by, when a friend of mine, in my own house, for sport-sake, has with one of these fellows counterfeited a jargon of Galimatias, patched up of phrases without head or tail, saving that he interlarded here and there some terms that had relation to their dispute, and held the coxcomb in play a whole afternoon together, who all the while thought he had answered pertinently and learnedly to all his objections; and yet this was a man of letters,

and reputation, and a fine gentleman of the long robe :—

> "Vos, O patricius sanguis, quos vivere fas est
> Occipiti cæco, posticæ occurrite sannæ."[1]

Whosoever shall narrowly pry into and thoroughly sift this sort of people, wherewith the world is so pestered, will, as I have done, find, that for the most part, they neither understand others, nor themselves; and that their memories are full enough, but the judgment totally void and empty; some excepted, whose own nature has of itself formed them into better fashion. As I have observed, for example, in Adrian Turnebus, who having never made other profession than that of mere learning only, and in that, in my opinion, he was the greatest man that has been these thousand years, had nothing at all in him of the pedant, but the wearing of his gown, and a little exterior fashion, that could not be civilised to courtier ways, which in themselves are nothing. I hate our people, who can worse endure an ill-contrived robe than an ill-contrived mind, and take their measure by the leg a man makes, by his behaviour, and so much as the very fashion of his boots, what kind of man he is. For within there was not a more polished soul upon earth. I have often purposely put him upon arguments quite wide of his profession, wherein I found he had so clear an insight, so quick an apprehension, so solid a judgment, that a man would have thought he had never practised any other thing but arms, and been all his life employed in affairs of State. These are great and vigorous natures :—

[1] "O you, O patrician blood, to whom it is permitted to live with eyes in the back of your head, beware of grimaces at you from behind."—Persius, *Sat.*, i. 61.

"Queis arte benigna
Et meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan"[1]:—

that can keep themselves upright in despite of a pedantic education. But it is not enough that our education does not spoil us; it must, moreover, alter us for the better.

Some of our Parliaments, when they are to admit officers, examine only their learning; to which some of the others also add the trial of understanding, by asking their judgment of some case in law; of these the latter, methinks, proceed with the better method; for although both are necessary, and that it is very requisite they should be defective in neither, yet, in truth, knowledge is not so absolutely necessary as judgment; the last may make shift without the other, but the other never without this. For as the Greek verse says—

"Ὡς οὐδὲν ἡ μάθησις ἦν μὴ νοῦς παρῇ."[2]

Would to God that, for the good of our judicature, these societies were as well furnished with understanding and conscience as they are with knowledge.

"Non vitæ, sed scolæ discimus."[3]

We are not to tie learning to the soul, but to work and incorporate them together: not to tincture it only, but to give it a thorough and perfect dye; which, if it will not take colour, and meliorate its imperfect state, it were without question better to let it alone. 'Tis a dangerous weapon, that will

[1] "Whom benign Titan (Prometheus) has framed of better clay."—Juvenal, xiv. 34.

[2] "To what use serves learning, if understanding fail us."—Apud Stobæum, tit. iii., p. 37 (1609).

[3] "We do not study for life, but only for the school."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 106.

hinder and wound its master, if put into an awkward and unskilful hand :—

"Ut fuerit melius non didicisse."[1]

And this, peradventure, is the reason why neither we nor theology require much learning in women ; and that Francis, Duke of Brittany, son of John V., one talking with him about his marriage with Isabella the daughter of Scotland, and adding that she was homely bred, and without any manner of learning, made answer, that he liked her the better, and that a woman was wise enough, if she could distinguish her husband's shirt from his doublet.[2] So that it is no so great wonder, as they make of it, that our ancestors had letters in no greater esteem, and that even to this day they are but rarely met with in the principal councils of princes ; and if the end and design of acquiring riches, which is the only thing we propose to ourselves, by the means of law, physic, pedantry, and even divinity itself, did not uphold and keep them in credit, you would, with doubt, see them in as pitiful a condition as ever. And what loss would this be, if they neither instruct us to think well nor to do well?

"Postquam docti prodierunt, boni desunt."[3]

All other knowledge is hurtful to him who has not the science of goodness.

But the reason I glanced upon but now, may it

[1] "So that it were better not to have learned." — Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 4.

[2] "Nos pères sur ce point étoient bien gens sensés,
Qui disoient qu'une femme en sait toujours assez,
Quand la capacité de son esprit se hausse
A connoître un pourpoint d'avec un haut-de-chausse."
—Molière, *Femmes savantes*, act ii., sc. 7.

[3] Seneca, *Ep.*, 95. "Since the *savans* have made their appearance among us, the good people have become eclipsed."—Rousseau, *Discours sur les Lettres.*

not also hence proceed, that, our studies in France having almost no other aim but profit, except as to those who, by nature born to offices and employments rather of glory than gain, addict themselves to letters, if at all, only for so short a time (being taken from their studies before they can come to have any taste of them, to a profession that has nothing to do with books), there ordinarily remain no others to apply themselves wholly to learning, but people of mean condition, who in that only seek the means to live; and by such people, whose souls are, both by nature and by domestic education and example, of the basest alloy the fruits of knowledge are immaturely gathered and ill digested, and delivered to their recipients quite another thing. For it is not for knowledge to enlighten a soul that is dark of itself, nor to make a blind man see. Her business is not to find a man's eyes, but to guide, govern, and direct them, provided he have sound feet and straight legs to go upon. Knowledge is an excellent drug, but no drug has virtue enough to preserve itself from corruption and decay, if the vessel be tainted and impure wherein it is put to keep. Such a one may have a sight clear enough who looks asquint, and consequently sees what is good, but does not follow it, and sees knowledge, but makes no use of it. Plato's principal institution in his Republic is to fit his citizens with employments suitable to their nature. Nature can do all, and does all. Cripples are very unfit for exercises of the body, and lame souls for exercises of the mind. Degenerate and vulgar souls are unworthy of philosophy. If we see a shoemaker with his shoes out at the toes, we say, 'tis no wonder; for, commonly, none go worse shod than they. In like manner, experience often presents us a physician

worse physicked, a divine less reformed, and (constantly) a scholar of less sufficiency, than other people.

Aristo of Chios had reason to say that philosophers did their auditors harm, forasmuch as most of the souls of those that heard them were not capable of deriving benefit from instruction, which, if not applied to good, would certainly be applied to ill:

"'Ασωτους ex Aristippi, acerbos ex Zenonis scholâ exire."[1]

In that excellent institution that Xenophon attributes to the Persians, we find that they taught their children virtue, as other nations do letters. Plato tells us that the eldest son in their royal succession was thus brought up; after his birth he was delivered, not to women, but to eunuchs of the greatest authority about their kings for their virtue, whose charge it was to keep his body healthful and in good plight; and after he came to seven years of age, to teach him to ride and to go a-hunting. When he arrived at fourteen he was transferred into the hands of four, the wisest, the most just, the most temperate, and most valiant of the nation; of whom the first was to instruct him in religion, the second to be always upright and sincere, the third to conquer his appetites and desires, and the fourth to despise all danger.

It is a thing worthy of very great consideration, that in that excellent, and, in truth, for its perfection, prodigious form of civil regimen set down by Lycurgus, though so solicitous of the education of children, as a thing of the greatest concern, and even in the very seat of the Muses, he should make

[1] "They proceeded effeminate debauchees from the school of Aristippus, cynics from that of Zeno."—Cicero, *De Naturâ Deor.*, iii. 31.

so little mention of learning; as if that generous youth, disdaining all other subjection but that of virtue, ought to be supplied, instead of tutors to read to them arts and sciences, with such masters as should only instruct them in valour, prudence, and justice; an example that Plato has followed in his laws. The manner of their discipline was to propound to them questions in judgment upon men and their actions; and if they commended or condemned this or that person or fact, they were to give a reason for so doing; by which means they at once sharpened their understanding, and learned what was right. Astyages, in Xenophon,[1] asks Cyrus to give an account of his last lesson[2]; and thus it was, "A great boy in our school, having a little short cassock, by force took a longer from another that was not so tall as he, and gave him his own in exchange: whereupon I, being appointed judge of the controversy, gave judgment, that I thought it best each should keep the coat he had, for that they both of them were better fitted with that of one another than with their own: upon which my master told me, I had done ill, in that I had only considered the fitness of the garments, whereas I ought to have considered the justice of the thing, which required that no one should have anything forcibly taken from him that is his own." And Cyrus adds that he was whipped for his pains,

[1] *Cyropædia*, i. 3.

[2] Cotton's version of this story commences differently, and includes a passage which is not in any of the editions of the original before me:—

"Mandane, in Xenophon, asking Cyrus how he would do to learn justice, and the other virtues amongst the Medes, having left all his masters behind him in Persia? He made answer, that he had learned those things long since; that his master had often made him a judge of the differences amongst his schoolfellows, and had one day whipped him for giving a wrong sentence."

as we are in our villages for forgetting the first aorist of τυπτῶ.

My pedant must make me a very learned oration, *in genere demonstrativo*, before he can persuade me that his school is like unto that. They knew how to go the readiest way to work; and seeing that science, when most rightly applied and best understood, can do no more but teach us prudence, moral honesty, and resolution, they thought fit, at first hand, to initiate their children with the knowledge of effects, and to instruct them, not by hearsay and rote, but by the experiment of action, in lively forming and moulding them; not only by words and precepts, but chiefly by works and examples; to the end it might not be a knowledge in the mind only, but its complexion and habit: not an acquisition, but a natural possession. One asking to this purpose, Agesilaus, what he thought most proper for boys to learn? "What they ought to do when they come to be men," said he.[1] It is no wonder, if such an institution produced so admirable effects.

They used to go, it is said, to the other cities of Greece, to inquire out rhetoricians, painters, and musicians; but to Lacedæmon for legislators, magistrates, and generals of armies; at Athens they learned to speak well: here to do well; there to disengage themselves from a sophistical argument, and to unravel the imposture of captious syllogisms; here to evade the baits and allurements of pleasure, and with a noble courage and resolution to conquer the menaces of fortune and death; those cudgelled their brains about words, these made it their business to inquire into things; there was an eternal babble of the tongue, here a continual exercise

[1] Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*. Rousseau adopts the expression in his *Discours sur les Lettres*.

of the soul. And therefore it is nothing strange if, when Antipater demanded of them fifty children for hostages, they made answer, quite contrary to what we should do, that they would rather give him twice as many full-grown men, so much did they value the loss of their country's education. When Agesilaus courted Xenophon to send his children to Sparta to be bred, "it is not," said he, "there to learn logic or rhetoric, but to be instructed in the noblest of all sciences, namely, the science to obey and to command."[1]

It is very pleasant to see Socrates, after his manner, rallying Hippias,[2] who recounts to him what a world of money he has got, especially in certain little villages of Sicily, by teaching school, and that he made never a penny at Sparta: "What a sottish and stupid people," said Socrates, "are they, without sense or understanding, that make no account either of grammar or poetry, and only busy themselves in studying the genealogies and successions of their kings, the foundations, rises, and declensions of states, and such tales of a tub!" After which, having made Hippias from one step to another acknowledge the excellency of their form of public administration, and the felicity and virtue of their private life, he leaves him to guess at the conclusion he makes of the inutilities of his pedantic arts.

Examples have demonstrated to us that in military affairs, and all others of the like active nature, the study of sciences more softens and untempers the courages of men than it in any way fortifies and excites them. The most potent empire that at this day appears to be in the whole world is that of the

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Agesilaus*, c. 7.
[2] Plato's *Dialogues: Hippias Major.*

Turks, a people equally inured to the estimation of arms and the contempt of letters. I find Rome was more valiant before she grew so learned. The most warlike nations at this time in being are the most rude and ignorant: the Scythians, the Parthians, Tamerlane, serve for sufficient proof of this. When the Goths overran Greece, the only thing that preserved all the libraries from the fire was, that some one possessed them with an opinion that they were to leave this kind of furniture entire to the enemy, as being most proper to divert them from the exercise of arms, and to fix them to a lazy and sedentary life. When our King Charles VIII., almost without striking a blow, saw himself possessed of the kingdom of Naples and a considerable part of Tuscany, the nobles about him attributed this unexpected facility of conquest to this, that the princes and nobles of Italy, more studied to render themselves ingenious and learned, than vigorous and warlike.[1]

CHAPTER XXV

OF THE INSTITUTION OF CHILDREN[2]

To MADAME DIANE DE FOIX, *Comtesse de Gurson*

I NEVER yet saw that father, but let his son be never so decrepit or deformed, would not, notwithstanding, own him: not, nevertheless, if he were not totally besotted, and blinded with his paternal

[1] "Il est de la dernière évidence," says Rousseau in his *Discours*; "si le retablissement des sciences et des arts a contribué à épurer les mœurs, qu'il y a plus d'erreurs dans l'Académie des Sciences que dans tout un peuple de Hurons."

[2] This Essay was doubtless suggested by the treatise of Montaigne's favourite author, Plutarch, on the same subject, which had been translated into English before his time by Sir Thomas Elyot.

affection, that he did not well enough discern his defects; but that with all defaults he was still his. Just so, I see better than any other, that all I write here are but the idle reveries of a man that has only nibbled upon the outward crust of sciences in his nonage, and only retained a general and formless image of them; who has got a little snatch of everything and nothing of the whole, *à la Françoise.* For I know, in general, that there is such a thing as physic, as jurisprudence: four parts in mathematics, and, roughly, what all these aim and point at; and, peradventure, I yet know farther, what sciences in general pretend unto, in order to the service of our life: but to dive farther than that, and to have cudgelled my brains in the study of Aristotle, the monarch of all modern learning, or particularly addicted myself to any one science, I have never done it; neither is there any one art of which I am able to draw the first lineaments and dead colour; insomuch that there is not a boy of the lowest form in a school, that may not pretend to be wiser than I, who am not able to examine him in his first lesson, which, if I am at any time forced upon, I am necessitated in my own defence, to ask him, unaptly enough, some universal questions, such as may serve to try his natural understanding; a lesson as strange and unknown to him, as his is to me.

I never seriously settled myself to the reading any book of solid learning but Plutarch and Seneca; and there, like the Danaides, I eternally fill, and it as constantly runs out; something of which drops upon this paper, but little or nothing stays with me. History is my particular game as to matter of reading, or else poetry, for which I have particular kindness and esteem: for, as Cleanthes said, as

the voice, forced through the narrow passage of a trumpet, comes out more forcible and shrill: so, methinks, a sentence pressed within the harmony of verse darts out more briskly upon the understanding, and strikes my ear and apprehension with a smarter and more pleasing effect. As to the natural parts I have, of which this is the essay, I find them to bow under the burden; my fancy and judgment do but grope in the dark, tripping and stumbling in the way; and when I have gone as far as I can, I am in no degree satisfied; I discover still a new and greater extent of land before me, with a troubled and imperfect sight and wrapped up in clouds, that I am not able to penetrate. And taking upon me to write indifferently of whatever comes into my head, and therein making use of nothing but my own proper and natural means, if it befall me, as oft-times it does, accidentally to meet in any good author, the same heads and commonplaces upon which I have attempted to write (as I did but just now in Plutarch's "Discourse of the Force of Imagination"), to see myself so weak and so forlorn, so heavy and so flat, in comparison of those better writers, I at once pity or despise myself. Yet do I please myself with this, that my opinions have often the honour and good fortune to jump with theirs, and that I go in the same path, though at a very great distance, and can say, "Ah, that is so." I am farther satisfied to find that I have a quality, which every one is not blessed withal, which is, to discern the vast difference between them and me; and notwithstanding all that, suffer my own inventions, low and feeble as they are, to run on in their career, without mending or plastering up the defects that this comparison has laid open to my

own view. And, in plain truth, a man had need of a good strong back to keep pace with these people. The indiscreet scribblers of our times, who, amongst their laborious nothings, insert whole sections and pages out of ancient authors, with a design, by that means, to illustrate their own writings, do quite contrary; for this infinite dissimilitude of ornaments renders the complexion of their own compositions so sallow and deformed, that they lose much more than they get.[1]

The philosophers, Chrysippus and Epicurus, were in this of two quite contrary humours: the first not only in his books mixed passages and sayings of other authors, but entire pieces, and, in one, the whole *Medea* of Euripides; which gave Apollodorus occasion to say, that should a man pick out of his writings all that was none of his, he would leave him nothing but blank paper: whereas the latter, quite on the contrary, in three hundred volumes that he left behind him, has not so much as one quotation.[2]

I happened the other day upon this piece of fortune; I was reading a French book, where after I had a long time run dreaming over a great many words, so dull, so insipid, so void of all wit or common sense, that indeed they were only French words: after a long and tedious travel, I came at last to meet with a piece that was lofty, rich, and elevated to the very clouds; of which, had I found either the declivity easy or the ascent gradual, there had been some excuse; but it was so perpendicular

[1] The observations of Montaigne cannot certainly be charged with being "laborious nothings," yet no author ever more freely, and in so wholesale a fashion, imported matter from other men's books into his own.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Chrysippus*, vii. 181, *and Epicurus*, x. 26.

a precipice, and so wholly cut off from the rest of the work, that by the first six words, I found myself flying into the other world, and thence discovered the vale whence I came so deep and low, that I have never had since the heart to descend into it any more. If I should set out one of my discourses with such rich spoils as these, it would but too evidently manifest the imperfection of my own writing. To reprehend the fault in others that I am guilty of myself, appears to me no more unreasonable, than to condemn, as I often do, those of others in myself: they are to be everywhere reproved, and ought to have no sanctuary allowed them. I know very well how audaciously I myself, at every turn, attempt to equal myself to my thefts, and to make my style go hand in hand with them, not without a temerarious hope of deceiving the eyes of my reader from discerning the difference; but withal it is as much by the benefit of my application, that I hope to do it, as by that of my invention or any force of my own. Besides, I do not offer to contend with the whole body of these champions, nor hand to hand with any one of them: 'tis only by flights and little light attempts that I engage them; I do not grapple with them, but try their strength only, and never engage so far as I make a show to do. If I could hold them in play, I were a brave fellow; for I never attack them, but where they are most sinewy and strong. To cover a man's self (as I have seen some do) with another man's armour, so as not to discover so much as his fingers' ends; to carry on a design (as it is not hard for a man that has anything of a scholar in him, in an ordinary subject to do) under old inventions patched up here and there with his own trumpery, and then to endeavour to conceal the

theft, and to make it pass for his own, is first injustice and meanness of spirit in those who do it, who having nothing in them of their own fit to procure them a reputation, endeavour to do it by attempting to impose things upon the world in their own name, which they have no manner of title to; and next, a ridiculous folly to content themselves with acquiring the ignorant approbation of the vulgar by such a pitiful cheat, at the price at the same time of degrading themselves in the eyes of men of understanding, who turn up their noses at all this borrowed incrustation, yet whose praise alone is worth the having. For my own part, there is nothing I would not sooner do than that, neither have I said so much of others, but to get a better opportunity to explain myself. Nor in this do I glance at the composers of centos, who declare themselves for such; of which sort of writers I have in my time known many very ingenious, and particularly one under the name of Capilupus,[1] besides the ancients. These are really men of wit, and that make it appear they are so, both by that and other ways of writing; as for example, Lipsius, in that learned and laborious contexture of his Politics.

But, be it how it will, and how inconsiderable soever these ineptitudes may be, I will say I never intended to conceal them, no more than my old bald grizzled likeness before them, where the painter has presented you not with a perfect face, but with mine. For these are my own particular opinions and fancies, and I deliver them as only what I myself believe, and not for what is to be believed

[1] Of Mantua. Lælius Capilupus is known as the writer of *Cento ex Virgilio de Vitâ Monachorum*, of which there is an edition, 4to, Edinburgh, 1565. It is a mere piece of patchwork out of Virgil.

by others. I have no other end in this writing, but only to discover myself, who, also shall, peradventure, be another thing to-morrow, if I chance to meet any new instruction to change me. I have no authority to be believed, neither do I desire it, being too conscious of my own inerudition to be able to instruct others.

Some one, then, having seen the preceding chapter, the other day told me at my house, that I should a little farther have extended my discourse on the education of children.[1] Now, madam, if I had any sufficiency in this subject, I could not possibly better employ it, than to present my best instructions to the little man that threatens you shortly with a happy birth (for you are too generous to begin otherwise than with a male); for, having had so great a hand in the treaty of your marriage, I have a certain particular right and interest in the greatness and prosperity of the issue that shall spring from it; beside that, your having had the best of my services so long in possession, sufficiently obliges me to desire the honour and advantage of all wherein you shall be concerned. But, in truth, all I understand as to that particular is only this, that the greatest and most important difficulty of human science is the education of children. For as in agriculture, the husbandry that is to precede planting, as also planting itself, is certain, plain, and well known; but after that which is planted comes to life, there is a great deal more to be done, more art to be used, more care to be taken, and much

[1] "Which, how fit I am to do, let my friends flatter me if they please, I have in the meantime no such opinion of my own talent, as to promise myself any very good success from my endeavour."

This passage would appear to be an interpolation by Cotton. At all events, I do not find it in the original editions before me, or in Coste.

more difficulty to cultivate and bring it to perfection : so it is with men ; it is no hard matter to get children ; but after they are born, then begins the trouble, solicitude, and care rightly to train, principle, and bring them up. The symptoms of their inclinations in that tender age are so obscure, and the promises so uncertain and fallacious, that it is very hard to establish any solid judgment or conjecture upon them. Look at Cimon, for example, and Themistocles, and a thousand others, who very much deceived the expectation men had of them. Cubs of bears and puppies readily discover their natural inclination ; but men, so soon as ever they are grown up, applying themselves to certain habits, engaging themselves in certain opinions, and conforming themselves to particular laws and customs, easily alter, or at least disguise, their true and real disposition ; and yet it is hard to force the propension of nature. Whence it comes to pass, that for not having chosen the right course, we often take very great pains, and consume a good part of our time in training up children to things, for which, by their natural constitution, they are totally unfit. In this difficulty, nevertheless, I am clearly of opinion, that they ought to be elemented in the best and most advantageous studies, without taking too much notice of, or being too superstitious in those light prognostics they give of themselves in their tender years, and to which Plato, in his Republic, gives, methinks, too much authority.

Madam, science is a very great ornament, and a thing of marvellous use, especially in persons raised to that degree of fortune in which you are. And, in truth, in persons of mean and low condition, it cannot perform its true and genuine office, being naturally more prompt to assist in the conduct of

war, in the government of peoples, in negotiating the leagues and friendships of princes and foreign nations, than in forming a syllogism in logic, in pleading a process in law, or in prescribing a dose of pills in physic. Wherefore, madam, believing you will not omit this so necessary feature in the education of your children, who yourself have tasted its sweetness, and are of a learned extraction (for we yet have the writings of the ancient Counts of Foix, from whom my lord, your husband, and yourself, are both of you descended, and Monsieur de Candale, your uncle, every day obliges the world with others, which will extend the knowledge of this quality in your family for so many succeeding ages), I will, upon this occasion, presume to acquaint your ladyship with one particular fancy of my own, contrary to the common method, which is all I am able to contribute to your service in this affair.

The charge of the tutor you shall provide for your son, upon the choice of whom depends the whole success of his education, has several other great and considerable parts and duties required in so important a trust, besides that of which I am about to speak: these, however, I shall not mention, as being unable to add anything of moment to the common rules: and in this, wherein I take upon me to advise, he may follow it so far only as it shall appear advisable.

For a boy of quality then, who pretends to letters not upon the account of profit (for so mean an object as that is unworthy of the grace and favour of the Muses, and, moreover, in it a man directs his service to and depends upon others), nor so much for outward ornament, as for his own proper

and peculiar use, and to furnish and enrich himself within, having rather a desire to come out an accomplished cavalier than a mere scholar or learned man; for such a one, I say, I would, also, have his friends solicitous to find him out a tutor, who has rather a well-made than a well-filled head[1]; seeking, indeed, both the one and the other, but rather of the two to prefer manners and judgment to mere learning, and that this man should exercise his charge after a new method.

'Tis the custom of pedagogues to be eternally thundering in their pupil's ears, as they were pouring into a funnel, whilst the business of the pupil is only to repeat what the others have said: now I would have a tutor to correct this error, and, that at the very first, he should according to the capacity he has to deal with, put it to the test, permitting his pupil himself to taste things, and of himself to discern and choose them, sometimes opening the way to him, and sometimes leaving him to open it for himself; that is, I would not have him alone to invent and speak, but that he should also hear his pupil speak in turn. Socrates, and since him Arcesilaus, made first their scholars speak, and then they spoke to them[1]:—

"Obest plerumque iis, qui discere volunt, auctoritas eorum, qui docent."[3]

It is good to make him, like a young horse, trot before him, that he may judge of his going, and how much he is to abate of his own speed, to accommodate himself to the vigour and capacity

[1] "*Tête bien faite*, an expression created by Montaigne, and which has remained a part of our language."—Servan.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, iv. 36.

[3] "The authority of those who teach, is very often an impediment to those who desire to learn."—Cicero, *De Naturâ Deor.*, i. 5.

of the other. For want of which due proportion we spoil all; which also to know how to adjust, and to keep within an exact and due measure, is one of the hardest things I know, and 'tis the effect of a high and well-tempered soul, to know how to condescend to such puerile motions and to govern and direct them. I walk firmer and more secure up hill than down.

Such as, according to our common way of teaching, undertake, with one and the same lesson, and the same measure of direction, to instruct several boys of differing and unequal capacities, are infinitely mistaken; and 'tis no wonder, if in a whole multitude of scholars, there are not found above two or three who bring away any good account of their time and discipline. Let the master not only examine him about the grammatical construction of the bare words of his lesson, but about the sense and substance of them, and let him judge of the profit he has made, not by the testimony of his memory, but by that of his life. Let him make him put what he has learned into a hundred several forms, and accommodate it to so many several subjects, to see if he yet rightly comprehends it, and has made it his own, taking instruction of his progress by the pedagogic institutions of Plato.[1] 'Tis a sign of crudity and indigestion to disgorge what we eat in the same condition it was swallowed; the stomach has not performed its office unless it have altered the form and condition of what was committed to it to concoct. Our minds work only upon trust, when bound and compelled to follow the appetite of another's fancy, enslaved and captivated under the authority of another's instruction;

[1] *i.e.*, the pedagogic method followed by Socrates, in the Dialogues of Plato.

we have been so subjected to the trammel, that we have no free, nor natural pace of our own; our own vigour and liberty are extinct and gone:—

"Nunquam tutelæ suæ fiunt."[1]

I was privately carried at Pisa[2] to see a very honest man, but so great an Aristotelian, that his most usual thesis was: "That the touchstone and square of all solid imagination, and of all truth, was an absolute conformity to Aristotle's doctrine; and that all besides was nothing but inanity and chimera; for that he had seen all, and said all." A position, that for having been a little too injuriously and broadly interpreted, brought him once and long kept him in great danger of the Inquisition at Rome.

Let him make him examine and thoroughly sift everything he reads, and lodge nothing in his fancy upon simple authority and upon trust. Aristotle's principles will then be no more principles to him, than those of Epicurus and the Stoics: let this diversity of opinions be propounded to, and laid before him; he will himself choose, if he be able; if not, he will remain in doubt.

"Non men che saver, dubbiar m' aggrata,"[3]

for, if he embrace the opinions of Xenophon and Plato, by his own reason, they will no more be theirs, but become his own. Who follows another, follows nothing, finds nothing, nay, is inquisitive after nothing.

"Non sumus sub rege; sibi quisque se vindicet."[4]

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[1] "They never become their own guardians."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 33.

[2] Montaigne means to say when he was at Florence in 1580.

[3] "It pleases me to doubt, not less than to know."—Dante, *Inferno*, xi. 93.

[4] "We are under no king; let each vindicate himself."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 33.

Let him, at least, know that he knows. It will be necessary that he imbibe their knowledge, not that he be corrupted with their precepts; and no matter if he forget where he had his learning, provided he know how to apply it to his own use. Truth and reason are common to every one, and are no more his who spake them first, than his who speaks them after: 'tis no more according to Plato, than according to me, since both he and I equally see and understand them. Bees cull their several sweets from this flower and that blossom, here and there where they find them, but themselves afterwards make the honey, which is all and purely their own, and no more thyme and marjoram: so the several fragments he borrows from others, he will transform and shuffle together to compile a work that shall be absolutely his own; that is to say, his judgment: his instruction, labour and study, tend to nothing else but to form that. He is not obliged to discover whence he got the materials that have assisted him, but only to produce what he has himself done with them. Men that live upon pillage and borrowing, expose their purchases and buildings to every one's view: but do not proclaim how they came by the money. We do not see the fees and perquisites of a gentleman of the long robe; but we see the alliances wherewith he fortifies himself and his family, and the titles and honours he has obtained for him and his. No man divulges his revenue; or, at least, which way it comes in: but every one publishes his acquisitions. The advantages of our study are to become better and more wise. 'Tis, says Epicharmus, the understanding that sees and hears, 'tis the understanding that improves everything, that orders everything, and that acts, rules, and reigns: all other faculties are

blind, and deaf, and without soul. And certainly we render it timorous and servile, in not allowing it the liberty and privilege to do anything of itself. Whoever asked his pupil what he thought of grammar and rhetoric, or of such and such a sentence of Cicero? Our masters stick them, full feathered, in our memories, and there establish them like oracles, of which the letters and syllables are of the substance of the thing. To know by rote, is no knowledge, and signifies no more but only to retain what one has intrusted to our memory. That which a man rightly knows and understands, he is the free disposer of at his own full liberty, without any regard to the author from whence he had it, or fumbling over the leaves of his book. A mere bookish learning is a poor, paltry learning; it may serve for ornament, but there is yet no foundation for any superstructure to be built upon it, according to the opinion of Plato, who says, that constancy, faith, and sincerity, are the true philosophy, and the other sciences, that are directed to other ends, mere adulterate paint. I could wish that Paluel or Pompey, those two noted dancers of my time, could have taught us to cut capers, by only seeing them do it, without stirring from our places, as these men pretend to inform the understanding, without ever setting it to work; or that we could learn to ride, handle a pike, touch a lute, or sing, without the trouble of practice, as these attempt to make us judge and speak well, without exercising us in judging or speaking. Now in this initiation of our studies in their progress, whatsoever presents itself before us is book sufficient; a roguish trick of a page, a sottish mistake of a servant, a jest at the table, are so many new subjects.

And for this reason, conversation with men is of very great use and travel into foreign countries; not to bring back (as most of our young monsieurs do) an account only of how many paces Santa Rotonda[1] is in circuit; or of the richness of Signora Livia's petticoats; or, as some others, how much Nero's face, in a statue in such an old ruin, is longer and broader than that made for him on some medal; but to be able chiefly to give an account of the humours, manners, customs, and laws of those nations where he has been, and that we may whet and sharpen our wits by rubbing them against those of others. I would that a boy should be sent abroad very young, and first, so as to kill two birds with one stone, into those neighbouring nations whose language is most differing from our own, and to which, if it be not formed betimes, the tongue will grow too stiff to bend.

And also 'tis the general opinion of all, that a child should not be brought up in his mother's lap. Mothers are too tender, and their natural affection is apt to make the most discreet of them all so overfond, that they can neither find in their hearts to give them due correction for the faults they may commit, nor suffer them to be inured to hardships and hazards, as they ought to be. They will not endure to see them return all dust and sweat from their exercise, to drink cold drink when they are hot, nor see them mount an unruly horse, nor take a foil in hand against a rude fencer, or so much as to discharge a carbine. And yet there is no remedy; whoever will breed a boy to be good for anything when he comes to be a man, must by no means spare him when young, and must very often transgress the rules of physic:—

[1] The Pantheon of Agrippa.

"Vitamque sub dio, et trepidis agat
In rebus."[1]

It is not enough to fortify his soul; you are also to make his sinews strong; for the soul will be oppressed if not assisted by the members, and would have too hard a task to discharge two offices alone. I know very well to my cost, how much mine groans under the burden, from being accommodated with a body so tender and indisposed, as eternally leans and presses upon her; and often in my reading perceive that our masters, in their writings, make examples pass for magnanimity and fortitude of mind, which really are rather toughness of skin and hardness of bones; for I have seen men, women, and children, naturally born of so hard and insensible a constitution of body, that a sound cudgelling has been less to them than a flirt with a finger would have been to me, and that would neither cry out, wince, nor shrink, for a good swinging beating; and when wrestlers counterfeit the philosophers in patience, 'tis rather strength of nerves than stoutness of heart. Now to be inured to undergo labour, is to be accustomed to endure pain:—

"Labor callum obducit dolori."[2]

A boy is to be broken in to the toil and roughness of exercise, so as to be trained up to the pain and suffering of dislocations, cholics, cauteries, and even imprisonment and the rack itself; for he may come by misfortune to be reduced to the worst of these, which (as this world goes) is sometimes inflicted on the good as well as the bad. As for proof, in our

[1] "Let him lead his life in the open air, and in business."—Horace, *Od.*, ii. 3, 5.

[2] "Labour hardens us against pain."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 15.

present civil war whoever draws his sword against the laws, threatens the honestest men with the whip and the halter.

And, moreover, by living at home, the authority of this governor, which ought to be sovereign over the boy he has received into his charge, is often checked and hindered by the presence of parents; to which may also be added, that the respect the whole family pay him, as their master's son, and the knowledge he has of the estate and greatness he is heir to, are, in my opinion, no small inconveniences in these tender years.

And yet, even in this conversing with men I spoke of but now, I have observed this vice, that instead of gathering observations from others, we make it our whole business to lay ourselves open to them, and are more concerned how to expose and set out our own commodities, than how to increase our stock by acquiring new. Silence, therefore, and modesty are very advantageous qualities in conversation. One should, therefore, train up this boy to be sparing and an husband of his knowledge when he has acquired it; and to forbear taking exceptions at or reproving every idle saying or ridiculous story that is said or told in his presence; for it is a very unbecoming rudeness to carp at everything that is not agreeable to our own palate. Let him be satisfied with correcting himself, and not seem to condemn everything in another he would not do himself, nor dispute it as against common customs:—

"Licet sapere sine pompâ, sine invidiâ."[1]

Let him avoid these vain and uncivil images of

[1] "Let us be wise without ostentation, without envy."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 103.

authority, this childish ambition of coveting to appear better bred and more accomplished, than he really will, by such carriage, discover himself to be. And, as if opportunities of interrupting and reprehending were not to be omitted, to desire thence to derive the reputation of something more than ordinary. For as it becomes none but great poets to make use of the poetical licence, so it is intolerable for any but men of great and illustrious souls to assume privilege above the authority of custom :—

"Si quid Socrates aut Aristippus contra morem et consuetudinem fecerunt, idem sibi ne arbitretur licere: magnis enim illi et divinis bonis hanc licentiam assequebantur."[1]

Let him be instructed not to engage in discourse or dispute but with a champion worthy of him, and, even there, not to make use of all the little subtleties that may seem pat for his purpose, but only such arguments as may best serve him. Let him be taught to be curious in the election and choice of his reasons, to abominate impertinence, and consequently, to affect brevity; but, above all, let him be lessoned to acquiesce and submit to truth so soon as ever he shall discover it, whether in his opponent's argument, or upon better consideration of his own; for he shall never be preferred to the chair for a mere clatter of words and syllogisms, and is no further engaged to any argument whatever, than as he shall in his own judgment approve it: nor yet is arguing a trade, where the liberty of recantation and getting off upon better thoughts, are to be sold for ready money :—

[1] "If Socrates and Aristippus have committed any act against manners and custom, let him not think that he is allowed to do the same; for it was by great and divine benefits that they obtained this privilege."—Cicero, *De Offic.*, i. 41.

"Neque, ut omnia, quæ præscripta et imperata sint, defendat, necessitate ullâ cogitur."[1]

If his governor be of my humour, he will form his will to be a very good and loyal subject to his prince, very affectionate to his person, and very stout in his quarrel; but withal he will cool in him the desire of having any other tie to his service than public duty. Besides several other inconveniences that are inconsistent with the liberty every honest man ought to have, a man's judgment, being bribed and prepossessed by these particular obligations, is either blinded and less free to exercise its function, or is blemished with ingratitude and indiscretion. A man that is purely a courtier, can neither have power nor will to speak or think otherwise than favourably and well of a master, who, amongst so many millions of other subjects, has picked out him with his own hand to nourish and advance; this favour, and the profit flowing from it, must needs, and not without some show of reason, corrupt his freedom and dazzle him; and we commonly see these people speak in another kind of phrase than is ordinarily spoken by others of the same nation, though what they say in that courtly language is not much to be believed.

Let his conscience and virtue be eminently manifest in his speaking, and have only reason for their guide. Make him understand, that to acknowledge the error he shall discover in his own argument, though only found out by himself, is an effect of judgment and sincerity, which are the principal things he is to seek after; that obstinacy and contention are common qualities, most appearing in mean souls; that to revise and correct himself, to

[1] "Neither is he driven by any necessity, that he should defend all things that are prescribed and enjoined him."—Cicero, *Acad.*, ii. 3.

forsake an unjust argument in the height and heat of dispute, are rare, great, and philosophical qualities. Let him be advised, being in company, to have his eye and ear in every corner; for I find that the places of greatest honour are commonly seized upon by men that have least in them, and that the greatest fortunes are seldom accompanied with the ablest parts. I have been present when, whilst they at the upper end of the chamber have been only commenting the beauty of the arras, or the flavour of the wine, many things that have been very finely said at the lower end of the table have been lost and thrown away. Let him examine every man's talent; a peasant, a bricklayer, a passenger: one may learn something from every one of these in their several capacities, and something will be picked out of their discourse whereof some use may be made at one time or another; nay, even the folly and impertinence of others will contribute to his instruction. By observing the graces and manners of all he sees, he will create to himself an emulation of the good, and a contempt of the bad.

Let an honest curiosity be suggested to his fancy of being inquisitive after everything; whatever there is singular and rare near the place where he is, let him go and see it; a fine house, a noble fountain, an eminent man, the place where a battle has been anciently fought, the passages of Cæsar and Charlemagne:—

> "Quæ tellus sit lenta gelu, quæ putris ab æstu,
> Ventus in Italiam quis bene vela ferat."[1]

Let him inquire into the manners, revenues, and

[1] "What country is bound in frost, what land is friable with heat, what wind serves fairest for Italy."—Propertius, iv. 3, 39.

alliances of princes, things in themselves very pleasant to learn, and very useful to know.

In this conversing with men, I mean also, and principally, those who only live in the records of history; he shall, by reading those books, converse with the great and heroic souls of the best ages. 'Tis an idle and vain study to those who make it so by doing it after a negligent manner, but to those who do it with care and observation, 'tis a study of inestimable fruit and value; and the only study, as Plato reports, that the Lacedæmonians reserved to themselves.[1] What profit shall he not reap as to the business of men, by reading the *Lives* of Plutarch? But, withal, let my governor remember to what end his instructions are principally directed, and that he do not so much imprint in his pupil's memory the date of the ruin of Carthage, as the manners of Hannibal and Scipio; nor so much where Marcellus died, as why it was unworthy of his duty that he died there. Let him not teach him so much the narrative parts of history as to judge them; the reading of them, in my opinion, is a thing that of all others we apply ourselves unto with the most differing measure. I have read a hundred things in Livy that another has not, or not taken notice of at least; and Plutarch has read a hundred more there than ever I could find, or than, peradventure, that author ever wrote; to some it is merely a grammar study, to others the very anatomy of philosophy, by which the most abstruse parts of our human nature penetrate. There are in Plutarch many long discourses very worthy to be carefully read and observed, for he is, in my opinion, of all others the greatest master in that kind of writing; but there are a thousand others which he has only

[1] *Hippias Major.*

touched and glanced upon, where he only points with his finger to direct us which way we may go if we will, and contents himself sometimes with giving only one brisk hit in the nicest article of the question, whence we are to grope out the rest. As, for example, where he says[1] that the inhabitants of Asia came to be vassals to one only, for not having been able to pronounce one syllable, which is No. Which saying of his gave perhaps matter and occasion to La Boetie[2] to write his "Voluntary Servitude." Only to see him pick out a light action in a man's life, or a mere word that does not seem to amount even to that, is itself a whole discourse. 'Tis to our prejudice that men of understanding should so immoderately affect brevity; no doubt their reputation is the better by it, but in the meantime we are the worse. Plutarch had rather we should applaud his judgment than commend his knowledge, and had rather leave us with an appetite to read more, than glutted with that we have already read. He knew very well, that a man may say too much even upon the best subjects, and that Alexandridas justly reproached him who made very good but too long speeches to the Ephori, when he said: "O stranger! thou speakest the things thou shouldst speak, but not as thou shouldst speak them."[3] Such as have lean and spare bodies stuff themselves out with clothes; so they who are defective in matter endeavour to make amends with words.

[1] In the *Essay on False Shame.*

[2] Born at Sarlac in Perigord, 1st November 1530, died 18th August 1563. Of his works, all unpublished during his life, there is a complete edition, Paris, 1846. There is a sufficiently copious account of this gentleman in the Memoir and Letters *suprâ*. He to some extent forestalled in his economical views Thoreau in his *Walden*, 1854. Yet both follow the lines of the Natural Philosophers.

[3] Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.*

Human understanding is marvellously enlightened by daily conversation with men, for we are, otherwise, compressed and heaped up in ourselves, and have our sight limited to the length of our own noses. One asking Socrates of what country he was, he did not make answer, of Athens, but of the world[1]; he whose imagination was fuller and wider, embraced the whole world for his country, and extended his society and friendship to all mankind; not as we do, who look no further than our feet. When the vines of my village are nipped with the frost, my parish priest presently concludes, that the indignation of God has gone out against all the human race, and that the cannibals have already got the pip. Who is it that, seeing the havoc of these civil wars of ours, does not cry out, that the machine of the world is near dissolution, and that the day of judgment is at hand; without considering, that many worse things have been seen, and that in the meantime, people are very merry in a thousand other parts of the earth for all this? For my part, considering the licence and impunity that always attend such commotions, I wonder they are so moderate, and that there is no more mischief done. To him who feels the hailstones patter about his ears, the whole hemisphere appears to be in storm and tempest; like the ridiculous Savoyard, who said very gravely, that if that simple king of France could have managed his fortune as he should have done, he might in time have come to have been steward of the household to the duke his master: the fellow could not, in his shallow imagination, conceive that there could be anything greater than a Duke of Savoy. And, in truth, we are all of us, insensibly, in this error, an error of a very

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 37; Plutarch, *On Exile*, c. 4.

great weight and very pernicious consequence. But whoever shall represent to his fancy, as in a picture, that great image of our mother nature, in her full majesty and lustre, whoever in her face shall read so general and so constant a variety, whoever shall observe himself in that figure, and not himself but a whole kingdom, no bigger than the least touch or prick of a pencil in comparison of the whole, that man alone is able to value things according to their true estimate and grandeur.

This great world which some do yet multiply as several species under one genus, is the mirror wherein we are to behold ourselves, to be able to know ourselves as we ought to do in the true bias. In short, I would have this to be the book my young gentleman should study with the most attention. So many humours, so many sects, so many judgments, opinions, laws, and customs, teach us to judge aright of our own, and inform our understanding to discover its imperfection and natural infirmity, which is no trivial speculation. So many mutations of states and kingdoms, and so many turns and revolutions of public fortune, will make us wise enough to make no great wonder of our own. So many great names, so many famous victories and conquests drowned and swallowed in oblivion, render our hopes ridiculous of eternising our names by the taking of half-a-score of light horse, or a henroost, which only derives its memory from its ruin. The pride and arrogance of so many foreign pomps, the inflated majesty of so many courts and grandeurs, accustom and fortify our sight without closing our eyes to behold the lustre of our own; so many trillions of men, buried before us, encourage us not to fear to go seek such good company in the other world: and so of the rest.

Pythagoras was want to say,[1] that our life resembles the great and populous assembly of the Olympic games, wherein some exercise the body, that they may carry away the glory of the prize: others bring merchandise to sell for profit: there are also some (and those none of the worst sort) who pursue no other advantage than only to look on, and consider how and why everything is done, and to be spectators of the lives of other men, thereby the better to judge of and regulate their own.

To examples may fitly be applied all the profitable discourses of philosophy, to which all human actions, as to their best rule, ought to be especially directed: a scholar shall be taught to know:

> "Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur:
> Quid fas optare: quid asper
> Utile nummus habet: patriæ carisque propinquis
> Quantum elargiri deceat: quem te Deus esse
> Jussit: et humanâ quâ parte locatus es in re:
> Disce"[2]—

what it is to know, and what to be ignorant; what ought to be the end and design of study; what valour, temperance, and justice are; the difference betwixt ambition and avarice, servitude and subjection, licence and liberty; by what token a man may know true and solid contentment; how far death, affliction, and disgrace are to be apprehended:

> "Et quo quemque modo fugiatque feratque laborem"[3];

by what secret springs we move, and the reason of our various agitations and irresolutions: for, methinks the first doctrine with which one should

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 3.

[2] "What we are, and to what life we are begotten; what it is right to wish; what is the use of new money; how much it becomes us to give to our country and dear kindred; whom the Deity has commanded thee to be; and in what human part thou art placed."—Persius, iii. 69.

[3] "And how you may shun or sustain every hardship."—Virgil, *Æneid*, iii. 459.

season his understanding, ought to be that which regulates his manners and his sense; that teaches him to know himself, and how both well to die and well to live. Amongst the liberal sciences, let us begin with that which makes us free; not that they do not all serve in some measure to the instruction and use of life, as all other things in some sort also do; but let us make choice of that which directly and professedly serves to that end. If we are once able to restrain the offices of human life within their just and natural limits, we shall find that most of the sciences in use are of no great use to us, and even in those that are, that there are many very unnecessary cavities and dilatations which we had better let alone, and, following Socrates' direction, limit the course of our studies to those things only where is a true and real utility :—

> "Sapere aude;
> Incipe! Qui rectè vivendi prorogat horam,
> Rusticus exspectat, dum defluat amnis; at ille
> Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis œvum."[1]

Tis a great foolery to teach our children :—

> "Quid moveant Pisces, animosaque signa Leonis,
> Lotus et Hesperiâ quid Capricornus aquâ,"[2]

the knowledge of the stars and the motion of the eighth sphere before their own :—

> "Τί Πλειάδεσσι καμοί;
> Τί δ' ἀστράσιν Βοώτεω"[3];

Anaximenes writing to Pythagoras,[4] "To what purpose," said he, "should I trouble myself in

[1] "Dare to be wise; begin! he who defers the hour of living well is like the clown, waiting till the river shall have flowed out: but the river still flows, and will flow for ever."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 2.

[2] "What influence Pisces have, or the sign of angry Leo, or Capricorn, washed by the Hesperian wave."—Propertius, iv. 1, 89.

[3] "What care I about the Pleiades or the stars of Taurus?"—Anacreon, *Ode*, xvii. 10.

[4] Diog. Laert., ii. 4.

searching out the secrets of the stars, having death or slavery continually before my eyes?" for the kings of Persia were at that time preparing to invade his country. Every one ought to say thus, "Being assaulted, as I am by ambition, avarice, temerity, superstition, and having within so many other enemies of life, shall I go ponder over the world's changes?"

After having taught him what will make him more wise and good, you may then entertain him with the elements of logic, physics, geometry, rhetoric, and the science which he shall then himself most incline to, his judgment being beforehand formed and fit to choose, he will quickly make his own. The way of instructing him ought to be sometimes by discourse, and sometimes by reading; sometimes his governor shall put the author himself, which he shall think most proper for him, into his hands, and sometimes only the marrow and substance of it; and if himself be not conversant enough in books to turn to all the fine discourses the books contain for his purpose, there may some man of learning be joined to him, that upon every occasion shall supply him with what he stands in need of, to furnish it to his pupil. And who can doubt but that this way of teaching is much more easy and natural than that of Gaza,[1] in which the precepts are so intricate, and so harsh, and the words so vain, lean, and insignificant, that there is no hold to be taken of them, nothing that quickens and elevates the wit and fancy, whereas here the mind has what to feed upon and to digest. This fruit, therefore, is not only without comparison, much more fair and beautiful; but will also be much more early ripe.

[1] Theodore Gaza, rector of the Academy of Ferrara.

'Tis a thousand pities that matters should be at such a pass in this age of ours, that philosophy, even with men of understanding, should be looked upon as a vain and fantastic name, a thing of no use, no value, either in opinion or effect, of which I think those ergotisms and petty sophistries, by prepossessing the avenues to it, are the cause. And people are much to blame to represent it to children for a thing of so difficult access, and with such a frowning, grim, and formidable aspect. Who is it that has disguised it thus, with this false, pale, and ghostly countenance? There is nothing more airy, more gay, more frolic, and I had like to have said, more wanton. She preaches nothing but feasting and jollity; a melancholic anxious look shows that she does not inhabit there. Demetrius the grammarian finding in the temple of Delphos a knot of philosophers set chatting together, said to them,[1] "Either I am much deceived, or by your cheerful and pleasant countenances, you are engaged in no very deep discourse." To which one of them, Heracleon the Megarean, replied: "'Tis for such as are puzzled about inquiring whether the future tense of the verb *βάλλω* be spelt with a double λ, or that hunt after the derivation of the comparatives *χεῖρον* and *βέλτιον*, and the superlatives *χείριστον* and *βέλτιστον*, to knit their brows whilst discoursing of their science; but as to philosophical discourses, they always divert and cheer up those that entertain them, and never deject them or make them sad"[2]:

[1] Plutarch, *Treatise on Oracles which have ceased.*

[2] "How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose;
But musical as is Apollo's lute."
—Milton, *Comus.*

"Deprendas animi tormenta latentis in ægro
Corpore; deprendas et gaudia; sumit utrumque
Inde habitum facies."[1]

The soul that lodges philosophy, ought to be of such a constitution of health, as to render the body in like manner healthful too; she ought to make her tranquillity and satisfaction shine so as to appear without, and her contentment ought to fashion the outward behaviour to her own mould, and consequently to fortify it with a graceful confidence, an active and joyous carriage, and a serene and contented countenance. The most manifest sign of wisdom is a continual cheerfulness; her state is like that of things in the regions above the moon, always clear and serene. 'Tis Baroco and Baralipton[2] that render their disciples so dirty and ill-favoured, and not she; they do not so much as know her but by hearsay. What! It is she that calms and appeases the storms and tempests of the soul, and who teaches famine and fevers to laugh and sing; and that, not by certain imaginary epicycles, but by natural and manifest reasons. She has virtue for her end, which is not, as the schoolmen say, situate upon the summit of a perpendicular, rugged, inaccessible precipice: such as have approached her find her, quite on the contrary, to be seated in a fair, fruitful, and flourishing plain, whence she easily discovers all things below; to which place any one may, however, arrive, if he know but the way, through shady, green, and sweetly-flourishing avenues, by a pleasant, easy, and smooth descent, like that of

[1] "You may discern the torments of mind lurking in a sick body; you may discern its joys: either expression the face assumes from the mind."—Juvenal, ix. 18.

[2] Two terms of the ancient scholastic logic.

the celestial vault. 'Tis for not having frequented this supreme, this beautiful, triumphant, and amiable, this equally delicious and courageous virtue, this so professed and implacable enemy to anxiety, sorrow, fear, and constraint, who, having nature for her guide, has fortune and pleasure for her companions, that they have gone, according to their own weak imagination, and created this ridiculous, this sorrowful, querulous, despiteful, threatening, terrible image of it to themselves and others, and placed it upon a rock apart, amongst thorns and brambles, and made of it a hobgoblin to affright people.

But the governor that I would have, that is such a one as knows it to be his duty to possess his pupil with as much or more affection than reverence to virtue, will be able to inform him, that the poets[1] have evermore accommodated themselves to the public humour, and make him sensible, that the gods have planted more toil and sweat in the avenues of the cabinets of Venus than in those of Minerva. And when he shall once find him begin to apprehend, and shall represent to him a Bradamante or an Angelica[2] for a mistress, a natural, active, generous, and not a viragoish, but a manly beauty, in comparison of a soft, delicate, artificial simpering, and affected form; the one in the habit of a heroic youth, wearing a glittering helmet, the other tricked up in curls and ribbons like a wanton minx; he will then look upon his own affection as brave and masculine, when he shall choose quite contrary to that effeminate shepherd of Phrygia.

Such a tutor will make a pupil digest this new lesson, that the height and value of true virtue

[1] Hesiod, Ἔργ. καὶ Ἡμ. (*Works and Days*), v. 287.
[2] Heroines of Ariosto.

consists in the facility, utility, and pleasure of its exercise; so far from difficulty, that boys, aswell as men, and the innocent as well as the subtle, may make it their own; it is by order, and not by force, that it is to be acquired. Socrates, her first minion, is so averse to all manner of violence, as totally to throw it aside, to slip into the more natural facility of her own progress; 'tis the nursing mother of all human pleasures, who in rendering them just, renders them also pure and permanent; in moderating them, keeps them in breath and appetite; in interdicting those which she herself refuses, whets our desire to those that she allows; and, like a kind and liberal mother, abundantly allows all that nature requires, even to satiety, if not to lassitude; unless we mean to say that the regimen which stops the toper before he has drunk himself drunk, the glutton before he has eaten to a surfeit, and the lecher before he has got the pox, is an enemy to pleasure. If the ordinary fortune fail, she does without it, and forms another, wholly her own, not so fickle and unsteady as the other. She can be rich, be potent and wise, and knows how to lie upon soft perfumed beds: she loves life, beauty, glory, and health; but her proper and peculiar office is to know how to regulate the use of all these good things, and how to lose them without concern: an office much more noble than troublesome, and without which the whole course of life is unnatural, turbulent, and deformed, and there it is indeed, that men may justly represent those monsters upon rocks and precipices.

If this pupil shall happen to be of so contrary a disposition, that he had rather hear a tale of a tub than the true narrative of some noble expedition or some wise and learned discourse; who at the beat

of drum, that excites the youthful ardour of his companions, leaves that to follow another that calls to a morris or the bears; who would not wish, and find it more delightful and more excellent, to return all dust and sweat victorious from a battle, than from tennis or from a ball, with the prize of those exercises; I see no other remedy, but that he be bound prentice in some good town to learn to make minced pies, though he were the son of a duke; according to Plato's precept, that children are to be placed out and disposed of, not according to the wealth, qualities, or condition of the father, but according to the faculties and the capacity of their own souls.

Since philosophy is that which instructs us to live, and that infancy has there its lessons as well as other ages, why is it not communicated to children betimes?—

> "Udum et molle lutum est; nunc, nunc properandus, et acri
> Fingendus sine fine rotâ."[1]

They begin to teach us to live when we have almost done living. A hundred students have got the pox before they have come to read Aristotle's lecture on temperance. Cicero said, that though he should live two men's ages, he should never find leisure to study the lyric poets; and I find these sophisters yet more deplorably unprofitable. The boy we would breed has a great deal less time to spare; he owes but the first fifteen or sixteen years of his life to education; the remainder is due to action. Let us, therefore, employ that short time in necessary instruction. Away with the thorny subtleties of dialectics; they are abuses, things by

[1] "The clay is moist and soft: now, now make haste, and form the pitcher on the rapid wheel."—Persius, iii. 23.

which our lives can never be amended: take the plain philosophical discourses, learn how rightly to choose, and then rightly to apply them; they are more easy to be understood than one of Boccaccio's novels; a child from nurse is much more capable of them, than of learning to read or to write. Philosophy has discourses proper for childhood, as well as for the decrepit age of men.

I am of Plutarch's mind, that Aristotle did not so much trouble his great disciple with the knack of forming syllogisms, or with the elements of geometry, as with infusing into him good precepts concerning valour, prowess, magnanimity, temperance, and the contempt of fear; and with this ammunition, sent him, whilst yet a boy, with no more than thirty thousand foot, four thousand horse, and but forty-two thousand crowns, to subjugate the empire of the whole earth. For the other acts and sciences, he says, Alexander highly indeed commended their excellence and charm, and had them in very great honour and esteem, but not ravished with them to that degree as to be tempted to affect the practice of them in his own person:—

"Petite hinc, juvenesque senesque,
Finem animo certum, miserisque viatica canis."[1]

Epicurus, in the beginning of his letter to Meniceus,[2] says, "That neither the youngest should refuse to philosophise, nor the oldest grow weary of it." Who does otherwise, seems tacitly to imply, that either the time of living happily is not yet come, or that it is already past. And yet, for all that, I would not have this pupil of ours imprisoned and made a slave to his book; nor

[1] "Seek hence, young men and old men, a certain end to the mind, and a *viaticum* for miserable grey hairs."—Persius, v. 64.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, x. 122.

would I have him given up to the morosity and melancholic humour of a sour ill-natured pedant; I would not have his spirit cowed and subdued, by applying him to the rack, and tormenting him, as some do, fourteen or fifteen hours a day, and so make a pack-horse of him. Neither should I think it good, when, by reason of a solitary and melancholic complexion, he is discovered to be overmuch addicted to his book, to nourish that humour in him; for that renders him unfit for civil conversation, and diverts him from better employments. And how many have I seen in my time totally brutified by an immoderate thirst after knowledge? Carneades was so besotted with it, that he would not find time so much as to comb his head or to pare his nails.[1] Neither would I have his generous manners spoiled and corrupted by the incivility and barbarism of those of another. The French wisdom was anciently turned into proverb: "Early, but of no continuance." And, in truth, we yet see, that nothing can be more ingenious and pleasing than the children of France; but they ordinarily deceive the hope and expectation that have been conceived of them; and grown up to be men, have nothing extraordinary or worth taking notice of: I have heard men of good understanding say, these colleges of ours to which we send our young people (and of which we have but too many) make them such animals as they are.[2]

But to our little monsieur, a closet, a garden, the table, his bed, solitude, and company, morning and evening, all hours shall be the same, and all

[1] Diogenes Laertius, iv. 62.

[2] Hobbes said that if he had been at college as long as other people he should have been as great a blockhead as they. But Bacon, before his time, had discovered the futility of the academical teaching at our universities.

places to him a study; for philosophy, who, as the formatrix of judgment and manners, shall be his principal lesson, has that privilege to have a hand in everything. The orator Isocrates, being at a feast entreated to speak of his art, all the company were satisfied with and commended his answer: "It is not now a time," said he, "to do what I can do; and that which it is now time to do, I cannot do."[1] For to make orations and rhetorical disputes in a company met together to laugh and make good cheer, had been very unreasonable and improper, and as much might have been said of all the other sciences. But as to what concerns philosophy, that part of it at least that treats of man, and of his offices and duties, it has been the common opinion of all wise men, that, out of respect to the sweetness of her conversation, she is ever to be admitted in all sports and entertainments. And Plato, having invited her to his feast, we see after how gentle and obliging a manner, accommodated both to time and place, she entertained the company, though in a discourse of the highest and most important nature:—

> "Æquè pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æquè;
> Et, neglecta, æque pueris senibusque nocebit."[2]

By this method of instruction, my young pupil will be much more and better employed than his fellows of the college are. But as the steps we take in walking to and fro in a gallery, though three times as many, do not tire a man so much as those we employ in a formal journey, so our lesson, as it were accidentally occurring, without any set obligation of time or place, and falling naturally into every

[1] Plutarch, *Symp.*, i. 1.

[2] "It profits poor and rich alike, and, neglected, will equally hurt old and young."—Horace, *Ep.*, i. 25.

action, will insensibly insinuate itself. By which means our very exercises and recreations, running, wrestling, music, dancing, hunting, riding, and fencing, will prove to be a good part of our study. I would have his outward fashion and mien, and the disposition of his limbs, formed at the same time with his mind. 'Tis not a soul, 'tis not a body that we are training up, but a man, and we ought not to divide him. And, as Plato says, we are not to fashion one without the other, but make them draw together like two horses harnessed to a coach. By which saying of his, does he not seem to allow more time for, and to take more care of exercises for the body, and to hold that the mind, in a good proportion, does her business at the same time too?

As to the rest, this method of education ought to be carried on with a severe sweetness, quite contrary to the practice of our pedants, who, instead of tempting and alluring children to letters by apt and gentle ways, do in truth present nothing before them but rods and ferules, horror and cruelty. Away with this violence! away with this compulsion! than which, I certainly believe nothing more dulls and degenerates a well-descended nature. If you would have him apprehend shame and chastisement, do not harden him to them: inure him to heat and cold, to wind and sun, and to dangers that he ought to despise; wean him from all effeminacy and delicacy in clothes and lodging, eating and drinking; accustom him to everything, that he may not be a Sir Paris, a carpet-knight, but a sinewy, hardy, and vigorous young man. I have ever from a child to the age wherein I now am, been of this opinion, and am still constant to it. But amongst other things, the strict government

of most of our colleges has evermore displeased me; peradventure, they might have erred less perniciously on the indulgent side. 'Tis a real house of correction of imprisoned youth. They are made debauched by being punished before they are so. Do but come in when they are about their lesson, and you shall hear nothing but the outcries of boys under execution, with the thundering noise of their pedagogues drunk with fury. A very pretty way this, to tempt these tender and timorous souls to love their book, with a furious countenance, and a rod in hand! A cursed and pernicious way of proceeding! Besides what Quintilian has very well observed,[1] that this imperious authority is often attended by very dangerous consequences, and particularly our way of chastising. How much more decent would it be to see their classes strewed with green leaves and fine flowers, than with the bloody stumps of birch and willows? Were it left to my ordering, I should paint the school with the pictures of joy and gladness; Flora and the Graces, as the philosopher Speusippus did his.[2] Where their profit is, let them there have their pleasure too. Such viands as are proper and wholesome for children, should be sweetened with sugar, and such as are dangerous to them, embittered with gall. 'Tis marvellous to see how solicitous Plato is in his Laws concerning the gaiety and diversion of the youth of his city, and how much and often he enlarges upon the races, sports, songs, leaps, and dances: of which, he says, that antiquity has given the ordering and patronage particularly to the gods themselves, to Apollo, Minerva, and the Muses. He insists long upon, and is very particular

[1] *Institutiones Oratoriæ*, i. 3.
[2] Diogenes Laertius, iv. 1.

in, giving innumerable precepts for exercises; but as to the lettered sciences, says very little, and only seems particularly to recommend poetry upon the account of music.

All singularity in our manners and conditions is to be avoided, as inconsistent with civil society. Who would not be astonished at so strange a constitution as that of Demophoon, steward to Alexander the Great, who sweated in the shade and shivered in the sun?[1] I have seen those who have run from the smell of a mellow apple with greater precipitation than from a harquebuss shot; others afraid of a mouse; others vomit at the sight of cream; others ready to swoon at the making of a feather bed; Germanicus could neither endure the sight nor the crowing of a cock. I will not deny, but that there may, peradventure, be some occult cause and natural aversion in these cases; but, in my opinion, a man might conquer it, if he took it in time. Precept has in this wrought so effectually upon me, though not without some pains on my part, I confess, that beer excepted, my appetite accommodates itself indifferently to all sorts of diet.

Young bodies are supple; one should, therefore, in that age bend and ply them to all fashions and customs: and provided a man can contain the appetite and the will within their due limits, let a young man, in God's name, be rendered fit for all nations and all companies, even to debauchery and excess, if need be; that is, where he shall do it out of complacency to the customs of the place. Let him be able to do everything, but love to do nothing but what is good. The philosophers themselves do not justify Callisthenes for forfeiting

[1] Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhon. Hypotyp.*, i. 14.

the favour of his master Alexander the Great, by refusing to pledge him a cup of wine. Let him laugh, play, wench with his prince: nay, I would have him, even in his debauches, too hard for the rest of the company, and to excel his companions in ability and vigour, and that he may not give over doing it, either through defect of power or knowledge how to do it, but for want of will:—

"Multum interest, utrum peccare aliquis nolit, an nesciat."[1]

I thought I passed a compliment upon a lord, as free from those excesses as any man in France, by asking him before a great deal of very good company, how many times in his life he had been drunk in Germany, in the time of his being there about his Majesty's affairs; which he also took as it was intended, and made answer, "Three times"; and withal told us the whole story of his debauches. I know some who, for want of this faculty, have found a great inconvenience in negotiating with that nation. I have often with great admiration reflected upon the wonderful constitution of Alcibiades, who so easily could transform himself to so various fashions without any prejudice to his health; one while outdoing the Persian pomp and luxury, and another, the Lacedæmonian austerity and frugality; as reformed in Sparta, as voluptuous in Ionia:—

"Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res."[2]

I would have my pupil to be such an one:

[1] "There is a vast difference betwixt forbearing to sin, and not knowing how to sin."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 90.

[2] "Every complexion of life, and station, and circumstance became Aristippus."—Horace, *Ep.*, xvii. 23.

"Quem duplici panno patentia velat,
Mirabor, vitæ via si conversa decebit,
Personamque feret non inconcinnus utramque."[1]

These are my lessons, and he who puts them in practice shall reap more advantage than he who has had them read to him only, and so only knows them. If you see him, you hear him; if you hear him, you see him. God forbid, says one in Plato, that to philosophise were only to read a great many books, and to learn the arts.

"Hanc amplissimam omnium artium bene vivendi disciplinam, vita magis quam literis, persequuti sunt."[2]

Leo, prince of Phlius, asking Heraclides Ponticus[3] of what art or science he made profession: "I know," said he, "neither art nor science, but I am a philosopher." One reproaching Diogenes that, being ignorant, he should pretend to philosophy: "I therefore," answered he, "pretend to it with so much the more reason." Hegesias entreated that he would read a certain book to him: "You are pleasant," said he; "you choose those figs that are true and natural, and not those that are painted; why do you not also choose exercises which are naturally true, rather than those written?"[4]

The lad will not so much get his lesson by heart as he will practise it: he will repeat it in his actions. We shall discover if there be prudence in his exercises, if there be sincerity and justice in his

[1] "I shall admire him whom suffering covers with a torn cloak, if a changed fortune becomes him, and he bears both parts without indecorum."—Horace, *Ep.*, xvii. 25.

[2] "They have proceeded to this discipline of living well, which of all arts is the greatest, by their lives, rather than by their reading."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, iv. 3.

[3] It was not Heraclides of Pontus who made this answer, but Pythagoras.

[4] Diogenes Laertius, vi. 48.

deportment, if there be grace and judgment in his speaking; if there be constancy in his sickness; if there be modesty in his mirth, temperance in his pleasures, order in his domestic economy, indifference in palate, whether what he eats or drinks be flesh or fish, wine or water :—

"Qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet: quique obtemperet ipse sibi, et decretis pareat."[1]

The conduct of our lives is the true mirror of our doctrine. Zeuxidamus, to one who asked him, why the Lacedæmonians did not commit their constitutions of chivalry to writing, and deliver them to their young men to read, made answer, that it was because they would inure them to action, and not amuse them with words. With such a one, after fifteen or sixteen years' study, compare one of our college Latinists, who has thrown away so much time in nothing but learning to speak. The world is nothing but babble; and I hardly ever yet saw that man who did not rather prate too much, than speak too little. And yet half of our age is embezzled this way: we are kept four or five years to learn words only, and to tack them together into clauses; as many more to form them into a long discourse, divided into four or five parts; and other five years, at least, to learn succinctly to mix and interweave them after a subtle and intricate manner: let us leave all this to those who make a profession of it.

Going one day to Orleans, I met in that plain on this side Cléry,[2] two teachers who were coming

[1] "Who considers his own discipline, not as a vain ostentation of science, but as a law and rule of life; and who obeys his own decrees, and the laws he has prescribed for himself."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 4.

[2] Ten miles south-west of Orleans.

to Bordeaux, about fifty paces distant from one another; and, a good way further behind them, I discovered a troop of horse, with a gentleman at the head of them, who was the late Monsieur le Comte de la Rochefoucauld. One of my people inquired of the foremost of these masters of arts, who that gentleman was that came after him; he, having not seen the train that followed after, and thinking his companion was meant, pleasantly answered, "He is not a gentleman; he is a grammarian; and I am a logician." Now we who, quite contrary, do not here pretend to breed a grammarian or a logician, but a gentleman, let us leave them to abuse their leisure; our business lies elsewhere. Let but our pupil be well furnished with things, words will follow but too fast; he will pull them after him if they do not voluntarily follow. I have observed some to make excuses, that they cannot express themselves, and pretend to have their fancies full of a great many very fine things, which yet, for want of eloquence, they cannot utter; 'tis a mere shift, and nothing else. Will you know what I think of it? I think they are nothing but shadows of some imperfect images and conceptions that they know not what to make of within, nor consequently bring out; they do not yet themselves understand what they would be at, and if you but observe how they haggle and stammer upon the point of parturition, you will soon conclude, that their labour is not to delivery, but about conception, and that they are but licking their formless embryo. For my part, I hold, and Socrates commands it, that whoever has in his mind a sprightly and clear imagination, he will express it well enough in one kind of tongue or another, and, if he be dumb, by signs:—

"Verbaque prævisam rem non invita sequentur."[1]

And as another as poetically says in his prose:—

"Quum res animum occupavere, verba ambiunt,"[2]

and this other:—

"Ipsæ res verba rapiunt."[3]

He knows nothing of ablative, conjunctive, substantive, or grammar, no more than his lackey, or a fishwife of the Petit Pont; and yet these will give you a bellyful of talk, if you will hear them, and peradventure shall trip as little in their language as the best masters of art in France. He knows no rhetoric, nor how in a preface to bribe the benevolence of the courteous reader; neither does he care to know it. Indeed all this fine decoration of painting is easily effaced by the lustre of a simple and blunt truth; these fine flourishes serve only to amuse the vulgar, of themselves incapable of more solid and nutritive diet, as Aper very evidently demonstrates in Tacitus.[4] The ambassadors of Samos, prepared with a long and elegant oration, came to Cleomenes, king of Sparta, to incite him to a war against the tyrant Polycrates; who, after he had heard their harangue with great gravity and patience, gave them this answer: "As to the exordium, I remember it not, nor consequently the middle of your speech; and for what concerns your conclusion, I will not do what you desire"[5]; a very

[1] "And the words will not reluctantly follow the thing preconceived."—Horace, *De Arte Poeticâ*, v. 311.

[2] "When things have taken possession of the mind, the words trip."—Seneca, *Controvers.*, iii. proem.

[3] "The things themselves carry the words with them."—Cicero, *De Finib.*, iii. 5.

[4] *Dialogue on Orators*, c. 19.

[5] Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.*

pretty answer this, methinks, and a pack of learned orators most sweetly gravelled. And what did the other man say? The Athenians were to choose one of two architects for a very great building they had designed; of these, the first, a pert affected fellow, offered his service in a long premeditated discourse upon the subject of the work in hand, and by his oratory inclined the voices of the people in his favour; but the other in three words: "O Athenians, what this man says, I will do."[1] When Cicero was in the height and heat of an eloquent harangue, many were struck with admiration; but Cato only laughed,[2] saying, "We have a mirth-making consul."[3] Let it go before, or come after, a good sentence or a thing well said, is always in season; if it neither suit well with what went before, nor has much coherence with what follows after, it is good in itself. I am none of those who think that good rhyme makes a good poem. Let him make short long, and long short if he will, 'tis no great matter; if there be invention, and that the wit and judgment have well performed their offices, I will say, here's a good poet, but an ill rhymer:—

"Emunctæ naris, durus componere versus."[4]

Let a man, says Horace, divest his work of all method and measure:—

"Tempora certa modosque, et, quod prius ordine verbum est,
Posterius facias, præponens ultima primis
Invenias etiam disjecti membra poetæ."[5]

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[1] Plutarch, *Instructions to Statesmen*, c. 4.
[2] Idem, *Life of Cato*, c. 6.
[3] "Ridiculum consulem."
[4] "Of delicate humour, but of rugged versification."—Horace, *Sat.*, iv. 8.
[5] "Take away certain rhythms and measures, and make the word which was first in order come later, putting that which should be last first, you will still find the scattered remains of the poet."—Horace, *Sat.*, i. 4, 58.

He will never the more lose himself for that; the very pieces will be fine by themselves. Menander's answer had this meaning, who being reproved by a friend, the time drawing on at which he had promised a comedy, that he had not yet fallen in hand with it; "It is made, and ready," said he, "all but the verses."[1] Having contrived the subject, and disposed the scenes in his fancy, he took little care for the rest. Since Ronsard and Du Bellay have given reputation to our French poesy, every little dabbler, for aught I see, swells his words as high, and makes his cadences very near as harmonious as they:—

"Plus sonat, quam valet."[2]

For the vulgar, there were never so many poetasters as now; but though they find it no hard matter to imitate their rhyme, they yet fall infinitely short of imitating the rich descriptions of the one, and the delicate invention of the other of these masters.

But what will become of our young gentleman, if he be attacked with the sophistic subtlety of some syllogism? "A ham makes a man drink; drink quenches thirst: *ergo* a ham quenches thirst." Why, let him laugh at it; it will be more discretion to do so, than to go about to answer it[3]; or let him borrow this pleasant evasion from Aristippus: "Why should I trouble myself to untie that, which bound as it is, gives me so much trouble?"[4] One offering at this dialectic juggling against Cleanthes, Chrysippus took him short, saying, "Reserve these baubles to play with children, and do not by such

[1] Plutarch, Whether the Athenians more excelled in Arms or in Letters.
[2] "He has more sound than force."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 40.
[3] Idem, *ib.*, 49.
[4] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 70.

fooleries divert the serious thoughts of a man of years."[1] If these ridiculous subtleties,

"Contorta et aculeata sophismata,"[2]

as Cicero calls them, are designed to possess him with an untruth, they are dangerous; but if they signify no more than only to make him laugh, I do not see why a man need to be fortified against them. There are some so ridiculous, as to go a mile out of their way to hook in a fine word:—

"Aut qui non verba rebus aptant, sed res extrinsecus arcessunt, quibus verba conveniant."[3]

And as another says:—

"Qui, alicujus verbi decore placentis, vocentur ad id, quod non proposuerant scribere."[4]

I for my part rather bring in a fine sentence by head and shoulders to fit my purpose, than divert my designs to hunt after a sentence. On the contrary, words are to serve, and to follow a man's purpose; and let Gascon come in play where French will not do. I would have things so excelling, and so wholly possessing the imagination of him that hears, that he should have something else to do, than to think of words. The way of speaking that I love, is natural and plain, the same in writing as in speaking, and a sinewy and muscular way of expressing a man's self, short and pithy, not so elegant and artificial as prompt and vehement:—

[1] "Diogenes Laertius, vii. 183.
[2] Cicero, *Acad.*, ii. 24.
[3] "Who do not fit words to the subject, but seek out for things quite from the purpose to fit the words."—Quintilian, viii. 3.
[4] "Who by their fondness of some fine sounding word, may be tempted to something they had no intention to write."—Seneca, *Ep.*, 59.

"Hæc demum sapiet dictio, quæ feriet"[1];

rather hard than wearisome; free from affectation; irregular, incontinuous, and bold; where every piece makes up an entire body; not like a pedant, a preacher, or a pleader, but rather a soldier-like style, as Suetonius calls that of Julius Cæsar; and yet I see no reason why he should call it so.[2] I have ever been ready to imitate the negligent garb, which is yet observable amongst the young men of our time, to wear my cloak on one shoulder, my cap on one side, a stocking in disorder, which seems to express a kind of haughty disdain of these exotic ornaments, and a contempt of the artificial; but I find this negligence of much better use in the form of speaking. All affectation, particularly in the French gaiety and freedom, is ungraceful in a courtier, and in a monarchy every gentleman ought to be fashioned according to the court model; for which reason, an easy and natural negligence does well. I no more like a web where the knots and seams are to be seen, than a fine figure, so delicate, that a man may tell all the bones and veins:—

"Quæ veritati operam dat oratio, incomposita sit et simplex."[3]
"Quis accurat loquiturè, nisi qui vult putide loqui?"[4]

That eloquence prejudices the subject it would advance, that wholly attracts us to itself. And as in our outward habit, 'tis a ridiculous effeminacy to distinguish ourselves by a particular and unusual

[1] "That utterance indeed will have a taste which shall strike [the ear]."—*Epitaph on Lucan*, in Fabricius, *Biblioth. Lat.*, ii. 10.

[2] Montaigne's difficulty arose from the imperfect text before him—"Eloquentia militari; qua re aut æquavit," &c.; whereas the proper reading is "Eloquentiâ, militarique re, aut æquavit," &c.—Suetonius, *Life of Julius Cæsar*, c. 55.

[3] "Let the language that is dedicated to truth be plain and unaffected."—Seneca, *Ep.* 40.

[4] "Who studies to speak accurately, that does not at the same time wish to perplex his auditory?"—Idem, *Ep.*, 75.

garb or fashion; so in language, to study new phrases, and to affect words that are not of current use, proceeds from a puerile and scholastic ambition. May I be bound to speak no other language than what is spoken in the market-places of Paris! Aristophanes the grammarian was quite out, when he reprehended Epicurus for his plain way of delivering himself, and the design of his oratory, which was only perspicuity of speech.[1] The imitation of words, by its own facility, immediately disperses itself through a whole people; but the imitation of inventing and fitly applying those words is of a slower progress. The generality of readers, for having found a like robe, very mistakingly imagine they have the same body and inside too, whereas force and sinews are never to be borrowed; the gloss and outward ornament, that is, words and elocution, may. Most of those I converse with, speak the same language I here write; but whether they think the same thoughts I cannot say. The Athenians, says Plato,[2] study fulness and elegancy of speaking; the Lacedæmonians affect brevity, and those of Crete to aim more at the fecundity of conception than the fertility of speech; and these are the best. Zeno used to say that he had two sorts of disciples, one that he called φιλολόγους, curious to learn things, and these were his favourites; the other, λογοφίλους, that cared for nothing but words. Not that fine speaking is not a very good and commendable quality; but not so excellent and so necessary as some would make it; and I am scandalised that our whole life should be spent in nothing else. I would first understand my own language, and that of my neighbours, with whom most of my business and conversation lies.

[1] Diogenes Laertius, x. 13.

[2] Stobæus, *Serm.* xxxiv.

No doubt but Greek and Latin are very great ornaments, and of very great use, but we buy them too dear. I will here discover one way, which has been experimented in my own person, by which they are to be had better cheap, and such may make use of it as will. My late father having made the most precise inquiry that any man could possibly make amongst men of the greatest learning and judgment, of an exact method of education, was by them cautioned of this inconvenience then in use, and made to believe, that the tedious time we applied to the learning of the tongues of them who had them for nothing, was the sole cause we could not arrive to the grandeur of soul and perfection of knowledge, of the ancient Greeks and Romans. I do not, however, believe that to be the only cause. So it is, that the expedient my father found out for this was, that in my infancy, and before I began to speak, he committed me to the care of a German, who since died a famous physician in France, totally ignorant of our language, and very well versed in Latin. This man, whom he had sent for expressly, and who was paid very highly, had me continually in his arms; he had with him also joined two others, of inferior learning, to attend me, and to relieve him; these spoke to me in no other language but Latin. As to the rest of his household, it was an inviolable rule, that neither himself, nor my mother, nor valet, nor chambermaid, should speak anything in my company, but such Latin words as each one had learned to chatter with me.[1] It is not to be imagined how great an advantage this proved to the whole family; my father and my mother by

[1] These passages are the basis of a small volume by the Abbé Mangin: "Éducation de Montaigne; ou, L'Art d'enseigner le Latin à l'instar des mères latines."

this means learned Latin enough to understand it perfectly well, and to speak it to such a degree as was sufficient for any necessary use; as also those of the servants did who were most frequently with me. In short, we Latined it at such a rate, that it overflowed to all the neighbouring villages, where there yet remain, that have established themselves by custom, several Latin appellations of artisans and their tools. As for what concerns myself, I was above six years of age before I understood either French or Perigordin, any more than Arabic; and without art, book, grammar, or precept, whipping, or the expense of a tear, I had, by that time, learned to speak as pure Latin as my master himself, for I had no means of mixing it up with any other. If, for example, they were to give me a theme after the college fashion, they gave it to others in French; but to me they were to give it in bad Latin, to turn it into that which was good. And Nicolas Grouchy, who wrote a book *De Comitiis Romanorum*; Guillaume Guerente, who wrote a comment upon Aristotle: George Buchanan, that great Scottish poet: and Marc Antoine Muret (whom both France and Italy have acknowledged for the best orator of his time), my domestic tutors, have all of them often told me that I had in my infancy that language so very fluent and ready, that they were afraid to enter into discourse with me. And particularly Buchanan, whom I since saw attending the late Mareschal de Brissac, then told me, that he was about to write a treatise of education, the example of which he intended to take from mine; for he was then tutor to that Comte de Brissac who afterward proved so valiant and so brave a gentleman.

As to Greek, of which I have *quasi* no knowledge, my father designed to have it taught me by

art, but a new way, and by way of sport; rolling our declensions to and fro, after the manner of those who, by certain games of tables, learn geometry and arithmetic. For he, amongst other rules, had been advised to make me relish science and duty by an unforced will, and of my own voluntary motion, and to educate my soul in all liberty and delight, without any severity or constraint; which he was an observer of to such a degree, even of superstition, if I may say so, that some being of opinion that it troubles and disturbs the brains of children suddenly to wake them in the morning, and to snatch them violently and over-hastily from sleep (wherein they are much more profoundly involved than we), he caused me to be wakened by the sound of some musical instrument, and was never unprovided of a musician for that purpose. By this example you may judge of the rest, this alone being sufficient to recommend both the prudence and the affection of so good a father, who is not to be blamed if he did not reap fruits answerable to so exquisite a culture. Of this, two things were the cause: first, a sterile and improper soil; for, though I was of a strong and healthful constitution, and of a disposition tolerably sweet and tractable, yet I was, withal, so heavy, idle, and indisposed, that they could not rouse me from my sloth, not even to get me out to play. What I saw, I saw clearly enough, and under this heavy complexion nourished a bold imagination and opinions above my age. I had a slow wit that would go no faster than it was led; a tardy understanding, a languishing invention, and above all, incredible defect of memory; so that, it is no wonder, if from all these nothing considerable could be extracted. Secondly, like those who,

impatient of a long and steady cure, submit to all sorts of prescriptions and recipes, the good man being extremely timorous of any way failing in a thing he had so wholly set his heart upon, suffered himself at last to be overruled by the common opinions, which always follow their leader as a flight of cranes, and complying with the method of the time, having no more those persons he had brought out of Italy, and who had given him the first model of education, about him, he sent me at six years of age to the College of Guienne, at that time the best and most flourishing in France. And there it was not possible to add anything to the care he had to provide me the most able tutors, with all other circumstances of education, reserving also several particular rules contrary to the college practice; but so it was, that with all these precautions, it was a college still. My Latin immediately grew corrupt, of which also by discontinuance I have since lost all manner of use; so that this new way of education served me to no other end, than only at my first coming to prefer me to the first forms; for at thirteen years old, that I came out of the college, I had run through my whole course (as they call it), and, in truth, without any manner of advantage, that I can honestly brag of, in all this time.

The first taste which I had for books came to me from the pleasure in reading the fables of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; for, being about seven or eight years old, I gave up all other diversions to read them, both by reason that this was my own natural language, the easiest book that I was acquainted with, and for the subject, the most accommodated to the capacity of my age: for as for the *Lancelots du Lac*, the *Amadis*, the *Huons of Bordeaux*, and

such farragos, by which children are amused, I had never so much as heard their names, no more than I yet know what they contain; so exact was the discipline wherein I was brought up. But this was enough to make me neglect the other lessons that were prescribed me; and here it was infinitely to my advantage, to have to do with an understanding tutor, who very well knew discreetly to connive at this and other truantries of the same nature; for by this means I ran through Virgil's *Æneid,* and then Terence, and then Plautus, and then some Italian comedies, allured by the sweetness of the subject; whereas had he been so foolish as to have taken me off this diversion, I do really believe, I had brought away nothing from the college but a hatred of books, as almost all our young gentlemen do. But he carried himself very discreetly in that business, seeming to take no notice, and allowing me only such time as I could steal from my other regular studies, which whetted my appetite to devour those books. For the chief things my father expected from their endeavours to whom he had delivered me for education, were affability and good-humour; and, to say the truth, my manners had no other vice but sloth and want of metal. The fear was not that I should do ill, but that I should do nothing; nobody prognosticated that I should be wicked, but only useless; they foresaw idleness, but no malice; and I find it falls out accordingly. The complaints I hear of myself are these: "He is idle, cold in the offices of friendship and relation, and in those of the public, too particular, too disdainful." But the most injurious do not say, "Why has he taken such a thing? Why has he not paid such an one?" but, "Why does he part with nothing? Why does he not give?" And I should take it for a favour

that men would expect from me no greater effects of supererogation than these. But they are unjust to exact from me what I do not owe, far more rigorously than they require from others that which they do owe. In condemning me to it, they efface the gratification of the action, and deprive me of the gratitude that would be my due for it; whereas the active well-doing ought to be of so much the greater value from my hands, by how much I have never been passive that way at all. I can the more freely dispose of my fortune the more it is mine, and of myself the more I am my own. Nevertheless, if I were good at setting out my own actions, I could, peradventure, very well repel these reproaches, and could give some to understand, that they are not so much offended, that I do not enough, as that I am able to do a great deal more than I do.

Yet for all this heavy disposition of mine, my mind, when retired into itself, was not altogether without strong movements, solid and clear judgments about those objects it could comprehend, and could also, without any helps, digest them; but, amongst other things, I do really believe, it had been totally impossible to have made it to submit by violence and force. Shall I here acquaint you with one faculty of my youth? I had great assurance of countenance, and flexibility of voice and gesture, in applying myself to any part I undertook to act: for before

"Alter ab undecimo tum me vix ceperat annus,"[1]

I played the chief parts in the Latin tragedies of Buchanan, Guerente, and Muret, that were

[1] "The next from the eleventh year had scarcely taken hold of me."—Virgil, *Bucol.*, 39.

presented in our College of Guienne with great dignity: now Andreas Goveanus, our principal, as in all other parts of his charge, was, without comparison, the best of that employment in France; and I was looked upon as one of the best actors. 'Tis an exercise that I do not disapprove in young people of condition; and I have since seen our princes, after the example of some of the ancients, in person handsomely and commendably perform these exercises; it was even allowed to persons of quality to make a profession of it in Greece:—

"Aristoni tragico actori rem aperit: huic et genus et fortuna honesta erant: nec ars, quia nihil tale apud Græcos pudori est, ea deformabat."[1]

Nay, I have always taxed those with impertinence who condemn these entertainments, and with injustice those who refuse to admit such comedians as are worth seeing into our good towns, and grudge the people that public diversion. Well-governed corporations take care to assemble their citizens, not only to the solemn duties of devotion, but also to sports and spectacles. They find society and friendship augmented by it; and besides, can there possibly be allowed a more orderly and regular diversion than what is performed in the sight of every one, and very often in the presence of the supreme magistrate himself? And I, for my part, should think it reasonable, that the prince should sometimes gratify his people at his own expense, out of paternal goodness and affection; and that in populous cities there should be theatres erected for such entertainments,

[1] "He opened the matter to Aristo the tragical actor; he was of an honest stock and fortune; nor did the art, because nothing of the kind is a cause of shame among the Greeks, discredit him."—Livy, xxiv. 24.

if but to divert them from worse and private actions.

To return to my subject, there is nothing like alluring the appetite and affections; otherwise you make nothing but so many asses laden with books; by dint of the lash, you give them their pocketful of learning to keep; whereas, to do well you should not only lodge it with them, but make them espouse it.

CHAPTER XXVI

IT IS FOLLY TO REFER TRUTH AND ERROR TO OUR OWN CAPACITY

'Tis not, perhaps, without reason, that we attribute facility of belief and easiness of persuasion to simplicity and ignorance; for I fancy I have heard belief compared to the impression of a seal upon the soul, which by how much softer and of less resistance it is, is the more easy to be impressed upon:—

"Ut necesse est, lancem in libra, ponderibus impositis, deprimi, sic animum perspicuis cedere."[1]

By how much the soul is more empty and without counterpoise, with so much greater facility it yields under the weight of the first persuasion. And this is the reason that children, the common people, women, and sick folks, are most apt to be led by the ears. But then, on the other hand, 'tis a foolish presumption to slight and condemn all things for

[1] "As the scale of the balance must give way to the weight that presses it down, so the mind yields to demonstration."—Cicero, *Acad.*, ii. 12.

false that do not appear to us probable; which is the ordinary vice of such as fancy themselves wiser than their neighbours. I was myself once one of those; and if I heard talk of dead folks walking, of prophecies, enchantments, witchcrafts, or any other story I had no mind to believe:—

> "Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
> Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala,"[1]

I presently pitied the poor people that were abused by these follies. Whereas I now find, that I myself was to be pitied as much, at least, as they; not that experience has taught me anything to alter my former opinions, though my curiosity has endeavoured that way; but reason has instructed me, that thus resolutely to condemn anything for false and impossible, is arrogantly and impiously to circumscribe and limit the will of God, and the power of our mother nature, within the bounds of my own capacity, than which no folly can be greater. If we give the names of monster and miracle to everything our reason cannot comprehend, how many are continually presented before our eyes? Let us but consider through what clouds, and as it were groping in the dark, our teachers lead us to the knowledge of most of the things about us; assuredly we shall find that it is rather custom than knowledge that takes away their strangeness:—

> "Jam nemo, fessus satiate videndi,
> Suspicere in cœli dignatur lucida templa"[2];

and that if those things were now newly presented

[1] "Dreams, magic terrors, marvels, sorceries, nightmares, and Thessalian prodigies."—Horace. *Ep.*, ii. 3, 208.

[2] "Weary to satiety of the sight, now no one deigns to look up to heaven's lucid temples."—Lucretius, ii. 1037.

to us, we should think them as incredible, if not more, than any others.

> "Si nunc primum mortalibus adsint
> Ex improviso, si sint objecta repente,
> Nil magis his rebus poterat mirabile dici,
> Aute minus ante quod auderent fore credere gentes."[1]

He that had never seen a river, imagined the first he met with to be the sea; and the greatest things that have fallen within our knowledge, we conclude the extremes that nature makes of the kind:—

> "Scilicet et fluvius qui non est maximus, eist
> Qui non ante aliquem majorem vidit; et ingens
> Arbor, homoque videtur, et omnia de genere omni
> Maxima quæ vidit quisque, hæc ingentia fingit."[2]

"Consuetudine oculorum assuescunt animi, neque admirantur, neque requirunt rationes earum rerum, quas semper vident."[3]

The novelty, rather than the greatness of things, tempts us to inquire into their causes. We are to judge with more reverence, and with greater acknowledgment of our own ignorance and infirmity, of the infinite power of nature. How many unlikely things are there testified by people worthy of faith, which, if we cannot persuade ourselves absolutely to believe, we ought at least to leave them in suspense; for, to condemn them as impossible, is by a temerarious presumption to pretend to know the utmost bounds of possibility. Did we rightly understand the difference betwixt the impossible and the unusual, and betwixt that which is contrary

[1] Lucretius, ii. 1032. The sense of the passage is in the preceding sentence.

[2] "A little river seems to him, who has never seen a larger river, a mighty stream; and so with other things—a tree, a man—anything appears greatest to him that never knew a greater."—Idem, vi. 674.

[3] "Things grow familiar to men's minds by being often seen; nor are they inquisitive about things they daily see."—Cicero, *De Naturâ Deor.*, lib. ii. 38.

to the order and course of nature and contrary to the common opinion of men, in not believing rashly, and on the other hand, in not being too incredulous, we should observe the rule of *Ne quid nimis* enjoined by Chilo.[1]

When we find in Froissart, that the Comte de Foix[2] knew in Bearn the defeat of John, king of Castile, at Jubera the next day after it happened, and the means by which he tells us he came to do so, we may be allowed to be a little merry at it, as also at what our annals report, that Pope Honorius, the same day that King Philip Augustus died at Mantes, performed his public obsequies at Rome, and commanded the like throughout Italy, the testimony of these authors not being, perhaps, of authority enough to restrain us. But what if Plutarch, besides several examples that he produces out of antiquity, tells us, he knows of certain knowledge, that in the time of Domitian, the news of the battle lost by Antony in Germany was published at Rome, many days' journey from thence, and dispersed throughout the whole world, the same day it was fought; and if Cæsar was of opinion, that it has often happened, that the report has preceded the incident,[3] shall we not say, that these simple people have suffered themselves to be deceived with the vulgar, for not having been so clear-sighted as we? Is there anything more delicate, more clear, more sprightly, than Pliny's judgment, when he is pleased to set it to work? Anything

[1] Μηδὲν ἄγαν. Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*, lib. xi., cap. 12, and Pliny (*Nat. Hist.*, lib. vii., cap. 32) ascribe this maxim to Chilo, as does Diogenes Laertius in the *Life of Thales*, lib. i., sec. 41, but he afterward ascribes it to Solon in his *Life of Solon*, lib. i., sec. 63. It has been also attributed to others.

[2] In 1385.

[3] Arrian, *Civil Wars*, iii. 36.

more remote from vanity? Setting aside his learning, of which I make less account, in which of these excellences do any of us excel him? And yet there is scarce a young schoolboy that does not convict him of untruth, and that pretends not to instruct him in the progress of the works of nature.

When we read in Bouchet the miracles of St. Hilary's relics, away with them: his authority is not sufficient to deprive us of the liberty of contradicting him; but generally and offhand to condemn all suchlike stories, seems to me a singular impudence. That great St. Augustin[1] testifies to have seen a blind child recover sight upon the relics of St. Gervasius and St. Protasius at Milan; a woman at Carthage cured of a cancer, by the sign of the cross made upon her by a woman newly baptized; Hesperius, a familiar friend of his, to have driven away the spirits that haunted his house, with a little earth of the sepulchre of our Lord; which earth, being also transported thence into the church, a paralytic to have there been suddenly cured by it; a woman in a procession, having touched St. Stephen's shrine with a nosegay, and rubbing her eyes with it, to have recovered her sight, lost many years before; with several other miracles of which he professes himself to have been an eyewitness: of what shall we excuse him and the two holy bishops, Aurelius and Maximinus, both of whom he attests to the truth of these things? Shall it be of ignorance, simplicity, and facility; or of malice and imposture? Is any man now living so impudent as to think himself comparable to them in virtue, piety, learning, judgment, or any kind of perfection?—

[1] *De. Civ. Dei*, xxii. 8.

"Qui, ut rationem nullam afferrent, ipsâ auctoritate me frangerent."[1]

'Tis a presumption of great danger and consequence, besides the absurd temerity it draws after it, to contemn what we do not comprehend. For after, according to your fine understanding, you have established the limits of truth and error, and that, afterwards, there appears a necessity upon you of believing stranger things than those you have contradicted, you are already obliged to quit your limits. Now, that which seems to me so much to disorder our consciences in the commotions we are now in concerning religion, is the Catholics dispensing so much with their belief. They fancy they appear moderate, and wise, when they grant to their opponents some of the articles in question; but, besides that they do not discern what advantage it is to those with whom we contend, to begin to give ground and to retire, and how much this animates our enemy to follow his blow: these articles which they select as things indifferent, are sometimes of very great importance. We are either wholly and absolutely to submit ourselves to the authority of our ecclesiastical polity, or totally throw off all obedience to it: 'tis not for us to determine what and how much obedience we owe to it. And this I can say, as having myself made trial of it, that having formerly taken the liberty of my own swing and fancy, and omitted or neglected certain rules of the discipline of our Church, which seemed to me vain and strange: coming afterwards to discourse of it with learned men, I have found those same things to be built upon very good and solid ground and strong

[1] "Who, though they should adduce no reason, would convince me with their authority alone."—Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs*, i. 21.

foundation; and that nothing but stupidity and ignorance makes us receive them with less reverence than the rest. Why do we not consider what contradictions we find in our own judgments; how many things were yesterday articles of our faith, that to-day appear no other than fables? Glory and curiosity are the scourges of the soul; the last prompts us to thrust our noses into everything, the other forbids us to leave anything doubtful and undecided.

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST